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ABSTRACT

One of a series of educational packages designed for implementation either in a workshop atmosphere or through individual study, this Hot Topic guide presents a variety of materials to assist educators in designing and implementing classroom projects and activities centering on the topic of oral language development. This Hot Topic guide contains guidelines for workshop use; an overview/lecture on oral language development; and eight focused documents and articles from scholarly and professional journals. A 38-item annotated bibliography of relevant items in the ERIC database on the topic is attached. (RS)

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HOT TOPIC

GUIDE 1

Oral Language Development

Revised Edition

This Hot Topic Guide is one of a series of educational packages designed for implementation either in a workshop atmosphere or through individual study. With the comments and suggestions of numerous educators, the Hot Topic Guide series has evolved to address the practical needs of teachers and administrators. As you take the time to work through the contents of this guide, you will find yourself well on the way to designing and implementing a variety of classroom projects and activities centering on this topic.

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by Zhang Hong

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- Talking to Learn Subject Matter/Learning Subject Matter Talk

UPDATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
A collection of selected references and abstracts obtained directly from the ERIC database.

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In-Service Workshops and Seminars:
Suggestions for Using this Hot Topic Guide as a Professional Development Tool

Before the Workshop:

- Carefully review the materials presented in this Hot Topic Guide. Think about how these concepts and projects might be applied to your particular school or district.
- As particular concepts begin to stand out in your mind as being important, use the Bibliography section (found at the end of the packet) to seek out additional resources dealing specifically with those concepts.
- Look over the names of the teachers and researchers who wrote the packet articles and/or are listed in the Bibliography. Are any of the names familiar to you? Do any of them work in your geographical area? Do you have colleagues or acquaintances who are engaged in similar research and/or teaching? Perhaps you could enlist their help and expertise as you plan your workshop or seminar.
- As you begin to plan your activities, develop a mental "movie" of what you'd like to see happening in the classroom as a result of this in-service workshop or seminar. Keep this vision in mind as a guide to your planning.

During the Workshop:

- Provide your participants with a solid grasp of the important concepts that you have acquired from your reading, but don't load them down with excessive detail, such as lots of hard-to-remember names, dates or statistics. You may wish to use the Overview/Lecture section of this packet as a guide for your introductory remarks about the topic.
- Try modeling the concepts and teaching strategies related to the topic by "teaching" a minilesson for your group.
- Remember, if your teachers and colleagues ask you challenging or difficult questions about the topic, that they are not trying to discredit you or your ideas. Rather, they are trying to prepare themselves for situations that might arise as they implement these ideas in their own classrooms.
- If any of the participants are already using some of these ideas in their own teaching, encourage them to share their experiences.
- Even though your workshop participants are adults, many of the classroom management principles that you use every day with your students still apply. Workshop participants, admittedly, have a longer attention span and can sit still longer than your second-graders; but not that much longer. Don't have a workshop that is just a "sit down, shut up, and listen" session. Vary the kinds of presentations and activities you provide in your workshops. For instance, try to include at least one hands-on activity so that the participants will begin to get a feel for how they might apply the concepts that you are discussing in your workshop.
- Try to include time in the workshop for the participants to work in small groups. This time may be a good opportunity for them to formulate plans for how they might use the concepts just discussed in their own classrooms.
- Encourage teachers to go "a step further" with what they have learned in the workshop. Provide additional resources for them to continue their research into the topics discussed, such as books, journal articles, Hot Topic Guides, teaching materials, and local experts. Alert them to future workshops/conferences on related topics.

11/94

After the Workshop:

- Follow up on the work you have done. Have your workshop attendees fill out an End-of-Session Evaluation (a sample is included on the next page). Emphasize that their responses are anonymous. The participants' answers to these questions can be very helpful in planning your next workshop. After a reasonable amount of time (say a few months or a semester), contact your workshop attendees and inquire about how they have used, or haven't used, the workshop concepts in their teaching. Have any surprising results come up? Are there any unforeseen problems?
- When teachers are trying the new techniques, suggest that they invite you to observe their classes. As you discover success stories among teachers from your workshop, share them with the other attendees, particularly those who seem reluctant to give the ideas a try.
- Find out what other topics your participants would like to see covered in future workshops and seminars. There are nearly sixty Hot Topic Guides, and more are always being developed. Whatever your focus, there is probably a Hot Topic Guide that can help. An order form follows the table of contents in this packet.

Are You Looking for University Course Credit?

Indiana University's Distance Education program is offering new one-credit-hour Language Arts Education minicourses on these topics:

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Parents and the Reading Process
Exploring Creative Writing with Elementary Students

Secondary:
Varied Writing Strategies
Thematic Units and Literature
Exploring Creative Writing with Secondary Students

K-12:
Reading across the Curriculum
Writing across the Curriculum
Organization of the Classroom

Course Requirements:
These minicourses are taught by correspondence. Minicourse reading materials consist of Hot Topic Guides and ERIC/EDINFO Press books. You will be asked to write Goal Statements and Reaction Papers for each of the assigned reading materials, and a final Synthesis paper.

I really enjoyed working at my own pace.... It was wonderful to have everything so organized...and taken care of in a manner where I really felt like I was a student, however "distant" I was...."
--Distance Education student

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Advanced Study in the Teaching of:

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- Language Arts in the Elementary School
- Secondary School English/Language Arts
- Reading in the Secondary School

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Developing Parent Involvement Programs
Critical Thinking across the Curriculum
Organization and Administration of a School Reading Program

For More Information:
For course outlines and registration instructions, please contact:

Distance Education Office
Smith Research Center, Suite 150
2805 East 10th Street
Bloomington, IN 47408-2698
1-800-759-4723 or (812) 855-5847

Planning a Workshop Presentation
Worksheet

Major concepts you want to stress in this presentation:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Are there additional resources mentioned in the Bibliography that would be worth locating? Which ones? How could you get them most easily?

_____

_____

Are there resource people available in your area whom you might consult about this topic and/or invite to participate? Who are they?

_____

_____

What would you like to see happen in participants' classrooms as a result of this workshop? Be as specific as possible.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Plans for followup to this workshop: [peer observations, sharing experiences, etc.]

_____

_____

Agenda for Workshop
Planning Sheet

Introduction/Overview:

[What would be the most effective way to present the major concepts that you wish to convey?]

_____

_____

_____

Activities that involve participants and incorporate the main concepts of this workshop:

1) _____

_____

_____

_____

2) _____

_____

_____

_____

Applications:

Encourage participants to plan a mini-lesson for their educational setting that draws on these concepts. [One possibility is to work in small groups, during the workshop, to make a plan and then share it with other participants.]

Your plan to make this happen:

_____

_____

Evaluation:

[Use the form on the next page, or one you design, to get feedback from participants about your presentation.]

End-of-Session Evaluation

Now that today's meeting is over, we would like to know how you feel and what you think about the things we did so that we can make them better. Your opinion is important to us. Please answer all questions honestly. Your answers are confidential.

1. Check (✓) to show if today's meeting was

   ❑ Not worthwhile ❑ Somewhat worthwhile ❑ Very worthwhile

2. Check (✓) to show if today's meeting was

   ❑ Not interesting ❑ Somewhat interesting ❑ Very interesting

3. Check (✓) to show if today's leader was

   ❑ Not very good ❑ Just O.K. ❑ Very good

4. Check (✓) to show if the meeting helped you get any useful ideas about how you can make positive changes in the classroom.

   ❑ Very little ❑ Some ❑ Very much

5. Check (✓) to show if today's meeting was

   ❑ Too long ❑ Too short ❑ Just about right

6. Check (✓) whether you would recommend today's meeting to a colleague.

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

7. Check (✓) to show how useful you found each of the things we did or discussed today.

   Getting information/new ideas.

   ❑ Not useful ❑ Somewhat useful ❑ Very useful

   Seeing and hearing demonstrations of teaching techniques.

   ❑ Not useful ❑ Somewhat useful ❑ Very useful

   Getting materials to read.

   ❑ Not useful ❑ Somewhat useful ❑ Very useful

Listening to other teachers tell about their own experiences.

❑ Not useful ❑ Somewhat useful ❑ Very useful

Working with colleagues in a small group to develop strategies of our own.

❑ Not useful ❑ Somewhat useful ❑ Very useful

Getting support from others in the group.

❑ Not useful ❑ Somewhat useful ❑ Very useful

8. Please write one thing that you thought was best about today:

9. Please write one thing that could have been improved today:

10. What additional information would you have liked?

11. Do you have any questions you would like to ask?

12. What additional comments would you like to make?

Thank you for completing this form.

Developing Oral Language

by Zhang Hong
Indiana University

When we talk about oral language development, we do not mean teaching children to speak as much as we mean improving their ability to talk or communicate more effectively. At the basic level, oral language means communicating with other people. As we progress in language learning, we begin to admire people who speak intelligently and convincingly. We also expect that we can learn to talk like Dan Rather or Johnny Carson. Speech at this level is not simply basic communication; it involves thinking, knowledge and skills. It also requires practice and training. How can we help our children to develop oral proficiency? What do we need to do as teachers to facilitate that development? These are the questions we will discuss in this lecture.

Oral language acquisition for children is a natural process. They learn it almost without effort. The ability to speak grows with age, but it does not mean that such growth will automatically lead to perfection. To speak in more effective ways requires particular attention and constant practice. In terms of techniques, Holbrook (1983) sets out three criteria for oral language competence -- fluency, clarity and sensitivity. To help children achieve these levels of development is our responsibility as educators.

In order to find out what we should do to promote our goal of oral language development, let's review some classroom research. Many studies have indicated that oral language development has largely been neglected in the classroom (Holbrook, 1983). Oral language, even though used by the teacher, is not functioning as a means for students to gain knowledge and to explore ideas. Most of the time, oral language in the classroom is used more by teachers than by students.

Underlying this phenomenon, there are two faulty assumptions. One of these assumptions is that the teacher's role is to teach -- and to teach means to talk. Accordingly, teachers spend hours and hours teaching by talking while the children sit listening passively. Such conventional teaching-learning is one of the obstacles preventing the development of oral language. Children leaving these classrooms tend to be passive in their learning attitudes, and "disabled" in their learning abilities as well. The second assumption is based on the fact that children start learning and using oral language long before they go to school. Therefore, it is assumed that the major learning tasks for children in school are reading and writing, which are believed to be the two aspects of literacy.

In one investigation, Staab (1986) reported a steady decline of the use of oral language in classrooms as a major reason for the decline of

student's abilities to reason and to forecast as they progressed from lower to higher grades. Such a phenomenon is found not only in the language arts classroom, but also in other classrooms. According to Staab's and other researchers' observations (Britton, 1970; Flanders, 1970; Blumenfeld and Meece 1985), classrooms are dominated by teachers talking and by workbook exercises. Researchers call this phenomenon "teachers-talk-students-listen" or "teacher-dominated." Despite the research efforts to call attention to this problem, very little has been done to change the situation in the past decade (Blumenfeld & Meece, 1985).

Another result of teacher-dominated classrooms is the negative effect upon children's attitudes toward learning. Operating under the two above-mentioned faulty assumptions, teachers often fail to see that literacy learning is a continuum -- an on-going process of learning -- for children. Learning before going to school and learning in school often are viewed as separate processes. Oral language, which is the major learning instrument for children before going to school, is no longer available. Confronted with new tasks of learning to read and write while being deprived of their major learning tool, children tend to feel depressed and frustrated. Learning begins to loom large, and schooling gradually becomes routine. This is exactly the situation discussed in Staab's investigation. After a few years students will have become programmed to a kind of passive learning atmosphere--the teacher talks, they listen and do their homework. Here, learning simply means taking whatever is given. In this type of classroom environment, students learn some basic skills of reading and writing. However, they will not learn how to think critically and to make sound judgments of their own.

Staab speculates that we teachers have often become "so involved with establishing routine, finishing the textbook, covering curriculum, and preparing students for standardized tests that we have forgotten one of our original goals, that of stimulating thought (p.293)." Though Staab's speculation sounds critical, he does provide us with a thought-provoking explanation of the relationship between oral language development and thinking abilities development. As a matter of fact, such a lamenting of the oral language situation in our school curricula is not unique to Staab. Many studies conducted in the past decade have reached similar conclusions.

From the preceding discussion, we can see that oral language is indeed an important link in the process of children's learning and thinking development. It is not merely a language issue; it is also an intellectual issue. It deserves serious attention from both teachers and researchers. From the perspective of language development, oral language provides a foundation for the development of other language skills. For most children, the literacy learning process actually begins with speaking -- talking about their experiences, talking about themselves. It is through speech that children learn to organize their thinking and focus their ideas. The neglect

of oral language in the classroom will destroy that foundation; it also will severely hinder the development of other aspects of language skills.

Current research literature on critical thinking and cognitive development indicates that the development of language has a close relationship to the development of thinking abilities. Language, according to this research, is an important means for thinking development. This is especially true for elementary students. Before achieving proficiency in reading and writing -- and even after proficiency in reading and writing have been obtained -- oral language is one of the major means of learning and acquiring knowledge. Throughout life, oral language skills remain essential for engagement in intellectual dialogue, and for communication of ideas.

Given this understanding of the importance of oral language skills, we need to reflect on our attitudes toward the teaching-learning relationship. First of all, we need to overcome the faulty assumptions mentioned before. As teachers, we should not assume the role of an authoritarian knowledge giver. Instead, we should see ourselves as a friend facilitating students' learning. In emphasizing the role of oral language in the classroom, we are by no means implying that the teacher's role is not important; on the contrary, we present a more demanding task for teachers. To facilitate a learning process in which the children are given both opportunity and encouragement to speak and to explore their own thinking, the teacher has to do more than telling children what he or she means, or what the text means. Instead, the teacher has several different roles to play.

According to Corson (1987), the first and foremost thing a teacher needs to do is to earn the confidence and trust of his or her student by "revealing genuine friendliness, unconditional acceptance, warmth, empathy and interest in all dealings with the child." (p. 41) A close relationship between teacher and child is crucial in creating a learning/teaching environment that will benefit both sides. By speaking freely, without any constraints, a child tends to learn better.

On the basis of such a relationship, the teacher can aim to know his or her students and to bring their ideas and background knowledge into class learning activities. To achieve this goal, the teacher must be a good and responsive listener to children's talk. Having a listening audience has a great impact upon a talking child. We can also see this as a rewarding learning process for the teacher, because it is from this process that the teacher can learn about effective ways to talk with a child, and accordingly to help develop his or her language skills.

However, facilitation of a child's talking in class is not enough for language teaching. This experience only provides an environment conducive to both teaching and learning. At this point, the teacher can raise questions concerning the content of the class or the text. While maintaining the role of a knowing authority, the teacher still needs to persuade students. Here, one point should be emphasized -- implementation of oral language development across the curriculum requires teamwork. All

content-area teachers have to be actively involved in this task. Oral language development requires a collaboration not only between teachers and children, but also among teachers. Our goal is not only to get children to speak, but also to learn and develop through speech. Then, as the children's other language skills develop in the course of time, classroom talk can be directed more towards the goals of exploring ideas found in texts and sharpening their thoughts.

As suggested by Athey (1983), the teacher should pose questions that will challenge their students' thinking and knowledge and thereby lead the classroom activities into exploration of ideas. By so doing, we will not only bring into play children's oral language, but also their thinking skills. Some of the examples we have included in this package are from content area classrooms. "Speaking to learn" seems to be the working principle in all of these examples.

Including Language in Reading Instruction

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Eastern New Mexico University

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Teaching reading is an important objective of schools, and how best to teach this skill is a source of controversy in education literature. Unfortunately, all of this interest and concern have not solved the problems of illiteracy. The National Assessment of Educational Progress has assessed the reading levels of high school graduates. As interpreted in a speech by Shanker (1987), he said their results showed that "About 85% of the people who have graduated high school in this country can read a simple comic book . . . by the time he gets to the New York Times . . . you are down to 35% of those who graduate high school. The percentage of 17 1/2 year olds about to graduate from high school who can read a simple technical manual is under 5% . . . these are the successful students . . . "

Researchers who investigated literacy have spent much time illustrating the importance of expressive oral language development as a precursor to learning how to read (Heath, 1983). Wells (1987) developed a matrix composed of predictors of overall achievement in school of a 10 year old. The single best predictor of this achievement was the reading achievement of the child at 7 years old (.88 correlation). The two main predictors of reading achievement at age 7 was the child's exposure to literacy and the child's command of oral language at 5 years old (.83 multiple correlation).

Some of the most convincing evidence for the importance of language for learning to read comes from the studies of dyslexia. It was long thought that dyslexia and other reading problems stemmed from a visual perception problem but convincing evidence shows that this is not the case. Instead it is now believed that these reading problems stem from either specific linguistic deficiencies or an overall general language problem. This research as reviewed by Vellutino (1987), makes a clear case for why language needs to be addressed in the proper instruction of reading.

Although most children arrive to school with the ability to speak, they exhibit a wide range of abilities with regard to verbal expression. The children's background experiences are varied as well as their oral vocabulary. Westby (1985) discusses "decontextualization" as a problem in schools when students do not have familiarity with the content. Traditional reading programs do not necessarily have stories that are related to the child's life experiences. Many reading materials also do not deal with language within a natural situation. Both knowledge of the context of a story and the ability to communicate about the content are prerequisite skills to reading comprehension.

There are several suggestions for the promotion of good language development that have been derived from the research of language. Several researchers have developed their hypotheses from the different theories of learning. Vygotsky (1978) states that learning is an interactive process between a child and the caregiver. Learning growth takes place when the caregiver responds within the zone of proximal learning for the child. Bruner (1983) calls these responses of the caregiver "scaffolding" where the adults plays a larger part in the beginning but eventually withdraws the support as the child takes on the language role. Wells (1987) has made a comparison of various studies that investigated facilitating features of adult speech that foster language in a child. The following are principles that should guide an adult working with a child's language:

1. Take the child's attempts to initiate conversation seriously by listening with interest to what she or he has to say.

2. Because the child's utterances are often incomplete, ambiguous, or difficult to understand, take pains to make sure you have correctly interpreted his or her meaning.

3. In responding, make the child's meaning the point of departure for your contribution; your words are then more likely to match his or her understanding of the situation and so provide useful evidence for theory building and testing.

4. In deciding what to say and in selecting the form in which to say it, take into account the child's ability to comprehend. This does not mean staying always within the child's current range, for he or she needs opportunities for growth. It does mean constantly monitoring the child's comprehension and adopting appropriate strategies to help when problems occur.

The most striking difference between a language approach and traditional reading approaches is the role of the student. Language theorists see language as an interactive activity with communication being the motivating goal. The student must be an active participant in his or her learning and engage in an negotiatory style of interaction to get at a shared meaning (Wells, 1987). Traditional reading instruction often is teacher-directed and delegates the student role as the passive recipient of information. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) reviewed a study that compared direct instruction with a conversation/interaction form of instruction. The conversation/ interaction group made large and significant gains on a test of verbal-expressive skills, while the direct instruction group did not. The conversational approach was superior in fostering expressive language skills.

There are activities teachers can do to foster language in their classrooms. Jones (1988) encourages teachers to refocus how they view talk in the classroom. He makes many suggestions that include reducing teacher talk and

increasing student talk in the classroom. One way is to have open discussions where the teacher encourages exploring of new ideas, exchanging views, explaining concepts and descriptions for what they see. These discussions can begin with the teacher asking open ended questions (divergent) that promote longer responses where there is no "right" answer, rather than closed questions (convergent) that elicit brief responses and are evaluated for correctness.

Westby (1985) discusses ways to deal with the problem of decontextualized reading for students who do not have familiarity with the content and are not dealing with language within a real situation. She suggests that units be arranged around familiar topics for students or the students are given shared experiences with one topic throughout the curriculum, especially when skills are being taught. This view is also supported by Duffy (1981) who relates this to reading comprehension and states that "comprehension is created by the reader not the teacher . . . the guidance should not force the child to substitute the teacher's interpretation for his/her own."

Since language researchers see language as directly related to literacy, there have been several processes described that would promote reading instruction. Most incorporate the findings discussed so far into various reading programs. Donaldson makes many suggestions (1978) on how to prepare students for reading. She emphasizes the importance of making students more aware of the spoken tongue then making certain the child understands that print is the written version of speech. The benefits of having a written form of language should be explored.

Donaldson also explains that teachers need to give students adequate time to respond so that they can reflect upon answers.. Student errors should not be eliminated, but rather seen as opportunities for exploration and growth. The units of study should be meaningful with the smallest unit a sentence, so context can be used. Flashcards with sight words, a common instructional material, take words out of context and do not promote meaning and comprehension. Teachers should try to explain the reading task as a way to get information so they don't see the purpose as decoding. The child should be encouraged to ask questions so the teacher doesn't have to always detect problems on his/her own., Donaldson also gives several suggestions for how a teacher can do "assist learning" which as stated before is based on the theories of Vygotsky (1962) and Bruner (1983).

Tharp and Gallimore (1988) have devised a complete reading program that is also based on language research. It is referred to as responsive teaching and has several components. The teachers role is to assist performance in reading comprehension by helping the students to relate the text to their own experiences. Other than some prompts to assist the students in relating to their experiences (scaffolding), the teacher is supposed to let the students do the majority of the talking and give the child time to respond. The teacher should always relate his/her responses to what the student has said. The research has found this method to be effective for teaching reading comprehension.

An example of responsive teaching is illustrated by a transcript of a teacher (who has been learning this technique) and a student who is discussing a story they have just read (Figure 1). From this example, the teacher (T) does not do all of the talking and always asks questions that build on what the child has just said. Also, the child's own experiences about showing strength were related to the text. The child is an active participant in his or her learning and makes several contributions to the interaction.

Figure 1: Responsive Teaching Example. (UCLA, 1989 handout from Gallimore)
T: Okay, what did Kuhulan say when he came over to Finnmakol's home?
S: Is Finnmakol at home?
T: Ammm.
S: She said, "No, Finnmakol is not home. He went out to look for a giant named Kuhulan."
T: Ahum.
S: His wife said Finnmakol is stronger but he said, "I'll show you who's strong."
T: Okay. What could he do to show his strength?
S: Lift up the house.
T: All right. How is he going to do this?
S: Use his muscles.
T: Aha. Using that...okay. What else could he do to show his strength?
S: By sweating.
T: You show your strength by sweating? How do you show your strength by sweating?
S: You go like this. (Child flexes her muscles)
T: Okay. What do you call it when you do that?
S: Show his muscles.
T: Yes. Show his muscles. But does that show how strong you are?
S: Soft muscles.
T: That you have soft or hard muscles? What could he do to show his strength?
S: Lift up a tree. T: Lift up a tree. Sure. What else? S: Lift up somebody's house.
T: All right. Turn to the next two pages....
S: [inaudible]...heavy like rocks . two pages?
T: Yeah. Look at the next two pages.
S: Wow. He lift up the house.

Teachers modify and change their teaching methods to fit with their own personal teaching styles and the practical constraints of their classrooms. It would not be difficult for a teacher to incorporate responsive teaching into the guided practice portion of a directed lesson. Most importantly, any teacher who is instructing reading needs to be constantly concerned with promoting language in the classroom. Literacy is directly an outcome from oral language and the areas of reading, writing and oral language all need instruction and practice in the classroom. It is hoped that creative teachers will accommodate language into all areas of the curriculum, just as this has been found beneficial with reading and writing.

The students that are in our schools today have the potential to become successful adults. It is essential these students know how to communicate with other people. The quality of one's life may be limited if there are deficiencies in one's verbal language capabilities, reading comprehension and/or writing level. For students with difficulties in reading, it is known that the cause very likely

comes from a language deficiency, delay, or difference from the language of reading. There is need for continued research, but for now teachers will need to promote expressive language techniques to give the best reading instruction possible to their students.

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Some of these stories, like the games they were based on, were discarded or outgrown. Others had sufficient impetus to carry them through to completion. "The ADVANSHR" was never corrected, but it was made into a book which will be a linguistic puzzle for its author in a year or two. "A Raccoon Named Ashes" was almost ready for the school magazine when the first draft was completed. *A Trip to Florida* was redrafted and carefully copied by Kelly, grateful for the suggestion that she do some condensing, into an illustrated homemade book.

The connection between play and writing is a rich one for children. It enables them to bring into the classroom their own compelling interests—their imaginary games, their toys and books, their friendships, their fears, their dreams. It connects the inside classroom world with the larger world of recess, after school, and home. This abundant play material is transformed in various ways as children work with it in writing their own stories. When their play becomes their work, children find it particularly meaningful and satisfying.

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The 7th Clever Gretchen Conference on Folklore, Literature and Storytelling will be held on November 7, 1987. Thirty-five storytellers will be presenting over fifty workshops and forty minute performances. Write Kaye Lindauer, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244-2340.

Connecting to Language Through Story

Marni Schwartz

Just before I began to write this article, I stopped by a well-stocked music store and bought an Easy-to-Play book of Gershwin tunes I had seen in the window. I haven't played the piano much since I gave up lessons at age fourteen. At that time I offered the excuse that cheerleading, chorus, and swim team took all my time. Actually, an overwhelming sense of inadequacy as I faced the piano and my teacher moved me to quit.

I wasn't a kid who lacked self-esteem. In cheerleading my backjump arch ranked among the best on our team. The chorus director acknowledged my ability my moving shaky second sopranos to sing near me. At swim meets my dives could guarantee a few team points because I'd been diving with a coach since I was old enough to say, "One, two, three, spring up." In these areas I was self-assured. But at the piano, faced with my assigned pieces, I was a loser.

Every September when I ask students to introduce themselves to me in writing, more than a few state, "I'm no good in English." They have undoubtedly experienced that feeling of failure so familiar to me at the piano. Whether their embarrassment is a result of problems with reading, writing, filling in worksheets on parts of speech, or putting periods and commas in the right places doesn't matter. I know that I must help them connect to language personally and positively before they can begin to face the work of learning the processes and conventions of English.

Unfortunately these children have not often or ever seen themselves as powerful users of language. They see language as a right/wrong proposition. They believe there is a right way to read or a wrong way to write. (Ironically, when I teach adults, many of whom are language teachers, I find an equal percentage who believe they are "not good" at writing, speaking publicly, or performing dramatically for their peers.) I want to expose all my students to the exhilarating feeling of what it is to use language powerfully. I know every one of them can. Part of our job as teachers is to help our students realize they too can be masterful writers, speakers, readers, or performers. One device for building self-esteem in language class is storytelling.

Within the story experiences of people's lives is one secret to their connection with language. They have a well of story memories from which to draw. By dipping into this well they discover their long and often intense relationship with language. Through listening to stories they will deepen the well. In telling their own stories, they will experience some of the power of language, their language, be it natural or "borrowed."

Drawing from the Well

Many teachers encourage students to talk and write about meaningful life events. Some of those events are what I call story memories. We all possess memories of stories we've heard or read or watched. Story memories also include the times we told or read stories to others. In exploring those memories we "touch magic" (Yolen 1981).

I was first engulfed by my own story memories at a weekend gathering of storytellers and folkmusicians at the Sagamore Conference Center in the Adirondacks. Al Booth, a devotee of the poet Robert Service, had driven all the way from Maryland just to satisfy the need for song and story. I'll never forget how he brought to life the stranger "who looked to me like a man who'd lived in hell" and the shooting of Dan McGrew. Later, at the request of those who'd heard the narrative poems before, he told of the "strange things done in the midnight sun by the men who moil for gold." He cremated Sam McGee right before our eyes. Hearing the musical rhythms of the narrative poems brought me back to two I'd memorized in high school but since forgotten. Al's recitals challenged me to work on one of those the rest of the weekend. Now I consider Stephen Vincent Benet's "The Mountain Whippoorwill" a treasured object I'll be careful not to lose again.

Two other tellers, a couple who perform under the title Beauty and the Beast, took on the characters of Very Tall Mouse and Very Short Mouse from Arnold Lobel's *Mouse Tales*. Both the story and the friendship they obviously shared awakened memories of laughing over Frog and Toad's antics with my son.

Through the weekend workshops I began to take my turns recalling poems, songs, or short anecdotes about stories from my past. What helped me recollect bits and pieces of my 'story history' were the tales or memories others shared. One woman's A. A. Milne poems brought back Piglet's pretending to be Roo. I still shudder at the thought of Kanga approaching Piglet with a spoon of medicine meant for the little kangaroo. The more poems I heard, the more I remembered. The funny rhymes of Laura E. Richards' "Eletelephony" came flooding back. My mother always looked humorously forlorn when she cried, "Dear me! I am not certain quite that even now I've got it right." I almost recalled the entire "When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes . . ." a sonnet whose recital had brought me extra credit in sophomore English. With a little help from Sagamore's library I was able to do both Shakespeare and Miss Butler proud. What surprised me again and again over the weekend was how we triggered each others' stories. Every participant was empowered to say, "I have a story."

Now as I use storytelling in the classroom, I spend significant time asking students to search their pasts for story memories. These can relate to books someone read to them or they read on their own. The memories can include family stories or tales from cassette tapes, the radio, movies, or TV. I make a point not to discount the source of any story memory. It's a case of the haves and have nots if I recognize only book titles. Yet, it is an easy place to start. *Mike Mulligan and his Steam Shovel, The Cat in the Hat, The Pokey Little Puppy* and of course countless titles I've never heard of come pouring out. I'm always struck by the shouts of "Oh yeah, I remember that one" which validate a recollection. Story memories abound.

I encourage the stories behind the stories (the tales' tails?). I tell how I learned "The Mountain Whippoorwill" under duress. As a cocky ninth grader I imagined the drama coach, Mr. Quirk, was having a nervous breakdown because he wanted us to do a choral reading. They tell how they memorized a story in order to "read" it to a younger sibling or doll. Then others chuckle at the memory of believing they had fooled their parents by such "pretend" reading. Still others recall the applause of proud grandparents or remember special tales associated with a great-aunt's lap or her childhood. Some tell of adults who chronicled nightly the lives of imaginary characters. David told of his father's original stories in which Davey was the hero. Later, when each of the children worked on a story for a polished telling, David took the role of his dad and let us in on the magic he must have experienced as a child hero. In every case the children's recountings elicit other stories. I've felt on occasion as if I'm in the middle of a fabulous 'jam session' of tellers.

I believe this rich history is the place to begin to introduce children to storytelling. It is a deep well which children can return to again and again once they realize it's there.

Something different happens when children prepare a story, work on it, as they would work on a piece of writing. I am careful not to discount the stories that have emerged naturally. Powerful, spontaneous oral language is highly regarded in our world. So is a well-crafted speech. By practicing a story, seeing it change and grow, and telling it before an audience, children experience a special kind of thrill. Anyone who has run a school play or starred in a backyard extravaganza knows the magic of the stage. But it's more than just that. Actors are assigned roles. But storytellers find their stories, the ones they must tell. Then they make them their own.

Finding the Right Story

Some children dip right into the well of stories they already own and find one they must retrieve for a practiced telling. Others explore stories they have encountered only recently. Still others get hooked on the excitement of hunting for a treasure among the stacks or on records and tapes. What the teacher can provide is a variety of models and the time children need to choose well.

For students to see themselves as tellers, they must have good models. Naturally, the teacher must demonstrate. I tell of the church organist, Mrs. Burchim, who singled me out in the fourth grade to substitute for her as singer of

the morning Mass. It's a personal tale I've worked on for two years, one that has a mind of its own. Each time the audience greatly affects the telling. Then I might tell Aesops' "Wind and the Sun," a simple fable that remains slightly more stable. If possible, I bring in student tellers from the previous year to continue to show the possibilities in story choice and storytelling style. They give testimony to the fact that choosing the right story is half the work. They talk about how they decided on a story to tell and problems they encountered and solved. Local tellers offer a special treat too. Our area contains folklorists rich in knowledge of the Iroquois, the Erie Canal builders and the folk of the Adirondak Mountains as well as the history of storytelling as an art. Commercial records, cassettes, and videotapes add to our source of models and stories as well.

Finally comes the choosing of a story to tell. At first, children choose stories by pictures, by title, or by a desire to recreate a story they've heard. Eventually, they dig with a more complex set of expectations. A story must touch them; it must satisfy their peers; it must not contain elements that confuse or distract them. Naomi switched from story to story. Her choices all seemed like good possibilities. She had little difficulty recalling story events. But none of the stories was "just right." Choosing a writing topic was often difficult for Naomi too. She would false-start, as a swimmer might, again and again. Like a starting judge, I'd want to disqualify her. But in recent years I've come to respect the wait time writers and storytellers need, painful as it can be for their teacher. When Naomi finally performed *The Snow Child*, I could see that her deep love for the story helped her bring it to life. Not one of the others had held her attention so completely. I believe Naomi made a significant decision by holding off. In waiting for her, I acknowledged her right to decide and offered her a chance to experience the power of the "right" story.

When some budding tellers hunt for a story they go to the films or television shows they have loved. While I believe much of TV weakens children's ability to visualize, I do not devalue the powerful emotional impact of stories from the media. Marla reminded me of the mark *Bambi* had left on my life. When she first asked to prepare that story for a performance, I tried to steer her away. She seemed to have only a vague recollection of the characters and events from the Disney movie. I suggested she find a text of it in order to get the order of events and more detail. We discovered together that the original *Bambi* was no easy text. Marla was not deterred. Her final telling brought the thicket, the owl, Thumper and the giggly ice-walking scene to life. When she whispered, "Fire!" you could feel danger hovering above the room. Then Bambi's mother was dead. Every listener seemed mesmerized by the beauty and the pain of Marla's story. I know I was.

Other media-versions have surfaced in my classroom. Some children know Jason and the Argonauts or Thor only through the big screen. I overheard Cliff and Rob arguing about exactly what happened to Medusa in a film they had seen. I directed them to various written versions of Perseus' tale so they could

fashion a telling that fit them. Tellers have to try on several sizes of a story sometimes, and the movie version might be just a bit too big *or* too small.

Illustrations bring students to stories as well. Steve, a talented artist himself, wanted to tell Mercer Mayer's *Professor Wormbog's Gloomy Kerploppus*. His dad had read it to him many times, and Steve really admired the book's funny illustrations. When I suggested a storyboard as one exercise for learning a story, Steve dived into a masterful reproduction of Mayer's work. He spent several hours one night on the large storyboard. I originally hoped the activity would help students visualize a story's events rather than memorize its words. However, Steve seemed as reliant on his drawings to remember story events as did some of those groping for lovely but forgotten phrases. On the day of his performance for the class, Steve begged to have the storyboard in sight. My initial reaction was, "No, absolutely not," but as I learn repeatedly in working with children's language, there are no absolutes. I granted the request, and Steve gave a side-splitting, though somewhat choppy, performance of Mayer's work. Afterward, I asked Steve what he'd learned in the telling. He said he'd enjoyed working on the detailed drawing (he planned to give it to his dad for Father's Day), and he wanted to tell the story again without his cuecard.

Learning By Telling

The most empowering part of storytelling lies not in the recollecting or learning but in the sharing. While I have used the terms "perform" and "tell" interchangeably, the two can differ in the act of sharing. A story is a gift from teller to listener. Tellers look into the eyes of the audience and what they see there affects their tone of voice, their facial expressions, their posture, even their words. Kristyn told her thirteen-year-old peers Dr. Seuss's *Yertle the Turtle*. Kristyn, admired by staff and students alike for her mature approach to life, delivered the story in a very adult way. Atop the pile of turtles, she surveyed the pond below from a great distance. So I sent her to a recreation program for kids in the four to six age range. How the telling changed! Her face softened; her eyes widened; she stooped to pull the kids closer to the excitement. She added lines like, "And do you know what happened next?" She seemed to discover the hunger for story in a group of young language users, and she didn't disappoint them. Later, we marveled at what had happened. We listened to the tape of her telling, and she laughed and laughed. I knew the child in her was alive and well and would continue to inform the adult.

Children can retell stories from a very young age. At a family reunion recently I was asked to "settle the kids down" before a bedtime that was already much too late for most of them. As the children got word that someone was telling stories, I sat on the front porch of my mother's house asking the few who had already arrived what stories they knew. Billy, age five, announced his favorite. With very little effort I drew him into the telling.

"I know *Where the Wild Things Are*."

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"Oh, yes, I've heard that. What's the boy's name again?"

"Max. It's about when Max put on his wolf suit and went to where the wild things live."

"Oh, now I'm remembering. Billy, could you tell us that story?"

I took the role of crowd controller and settled the overtired crew as best I could. Once Billy knew he had the stage, a masterful look came over his face. I don't think he had ever known the attention of so many people before. At first he directed the tale only to me, but soon he "roared their terrible roars and smashed (gnashed) their terrible teeth" toward the entire crowd of adults and children now seated around him. He told the story almost word for word. Sendak's language and his tale of the boy's journey, his reign, and the sweet return home now truly belonged to Billy. Later, his mother said she had read the book to Billy perhaps twice over a year ago. She marveled that he'd internalized it so, but she acknowledged how much the story reflected Billy's struggle with behavior and need for approval. At five, Billy was closely connected to language.

Billy's learning of Sendak's words happened naturally. For children or anyone to learn a story successfully, the words must not get in the way. I encourage children to "draft" a telling much as they would a piece of writing, experimenting with intros, openings, and endings. They try out their stories with dialogue and without. Most importantly they work on visualizing the tale. If they can walk from scene to scene mentally, the words will come. Joanna had rehearsed her story many times for a partner or a small group. I could tell she had memorized the writer's phrasing. When she stood before the class, she panicked after about three lines. "I can't remember the words!" she gasped. "Just tell what happened next," I whispered. She started again. I could see her relax as she found the familiar characters and objects: Boots and his brothers hiking through the woods, the magic axe, the spade, and the trickling nut. At two other moments she began to lose concentration. I watched her fight off the distraction of her nervousness and return to the world of the story. At the end, she rolled her eyes, grinned, and sighed. Like Boots, who had heeded the calls of the powerful objects, Joanna had listened to the story in her mind and been rewarded.

Both children and adults choose certain stories because they must. Jane Yolen says, "Myth as serious statement plays an important role in the life of the child. It can be the child's key to understanding his or her own experience. It can also be the key to our understanding of the child." Gautham listed *Curious George Wins a Medal* on a sign-up list for possible stories. Now, Gautham had not exactly set my classroom on fire with energy the year he resided in my sixth grade. His writing came ever so slowly, his handwriting was truly indecipherable, and often, when questioned about an assigned task, he responded with a rather vacant grin. His parents and older brother had emigrated from India years before, but Gautham, born and bred in Schenectady, seemed the "typical American kid." Because the story's humor relies so much on the pictures of George's antics, I warned Gautham he'd have to work hard to help us see the

story. Not all of us had story memories of the Curious George books to draw from.

I don't believe it was the warning that inspired the work Gautham put into the story's preparation. Over the next few days as I moved from teller to teller, watching and coaching, Gautham "told" his story to the wall, to the mirror, to boxes stacked on a corner. Usually very social, he chose to work alone during most of the rehearsal time. I didn't watch too closely for fear of distracting him. As is unfortunately the case, I'm often negligent of the students "on task" in order to help the less-involved. So when Gautham shared his version of Curious George, I saw it for the first time. What must have fueled the energetic rehearsals was his love of the story and his delight at the thought of sharing it.

To see George the monkey come to life is probably the fantasy of any child who has known him. Curious George really is a child—sensitive, clownlike, desperate to learn and explore, desirous to please but awkward in the attempt. Gautham became George, to the delight of every child (twelve or otherwise) in the room. We could see soap bubbles filling the house as George attempted to clean the spilled ink. We watched him get butted by a goat, stampeded by a penful of pigs, and chased by a furious farmer. When George's escape took him to the science museum, we groaned knowing the dinosaur skeleton so tall, but not so sturdy, would topple as George made his way to the familiar-looking coconut tree.

Gautham took George on the road to library storyhours and to some fifth grade classes. His performance made him famous throughout our school just as George's eventual ride in space earned him a medal. More importantly, his sharing of the story introduced me to a child I really had not known before. Gautham, like George, had roots in another world. Being born in America did not erase those roots though I think Gautham wanted very much to be connected to life American-style. He had not yet found his place in school except as it related to chatting with friends which often got him in trouble. Like many children he had not connected the richness of his experience to what school required of him.

My "school" piano memories never offered me a treasure I could retrieve when I sat down to play either. I had only frustrations or minor successes at the strange, unreal pieces from my piano books. But memories of "Fascinating Rhythm" from a cocktail piano record my mother bought when I was a child did awaken my desire to play. Just seeing the name Gershwin on an Easy-to-Play collection hurled me back to the smells in our kitchen and the memory of my father dancing me around as my mother prepared supper. That record played nearly every night during the dinner hour until it wore out or till my teenaged brothers convinced my mother they couldn't "listen to that stuff all the time." That memory, tucked away in the secret part of me that is invincible, yet is child,

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allowed me to stop in the music store and buy my first piano book in years. If we can teach children, allow them really, to explore and savor their indestructible pasts, we will empower them not only as language users but as people ever growing, ever wanting to learn.

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Creative dramatics in the language arts classroom

by Bruce Robbins

It is ironic that although most English teachers consider drama to be within their curricular domain, drama is used more often as a teaching method in other disciplines. Dramatic techniques such as role playing and simulations are well documented in social studies and history, business and vocational, foreign language, counseling, and even science classes; but according to recent reports (Applebee, 1984; Goodlad, 1984) dramatic techniques are rarely used to teach language arts classes in the U.S., especially at the secondary level. English teachers tend to relegate drama to theater courses, isolating drama techniques from most English classrooms. Yet, the literature on classroom drama suggests that there is considerable untapped potential for using drama as a teaching method.

Experts emphasize that using dramatic techniques as a teaching method is not the same thing as teaching theater. Theater is an art form which focuses on a product, a play production for an audience. Drama in the classroom—often referred to as *creative dramatics* to distinguish it from theater arts—is informal and focuses on the process of dramatic enactment for the sake of the learner, not an audience. Classroom drama is not learning *about* drama, but learning *through* drama. Charles Combs (1988) explains:

> *While drama is informed by many of the ideas and practices of theater art, it is principally valued as a learning medium rather than as an art form, and is governed and validated through criteria other than aesthetics. Informal drama's goals are based in pedagogical, developmental and learning theory as much or more than they are arts based; its objectives are manifold, but they are all directed toward the growth and development of the participant rather than the entertainment or stimulation of the observer. (p.9)*

Drama is a highly valued teaching technique

In dramatic activities, students use and examine their present knowledge in order to induce new knowledge. Bolton (1985) points out that while much school learning is an accruing of facts, drama can help students reframe their knowledge into new perspectives. Dramatic activity is a way of exploring subject matter and its relationships to self and society, a way of "making personal meaning and sense of universal, abstract, social, moral, and ethical concepts through the concrete experience of the drama." (Norman, 1981, p. 50, as quoted by Bolton, 1985, p.155)

According to Dorothy Heathcote (1983), an important value of using drama in the classroom is that "in drama the complexity of living is removed temporarily into this protected bower so that children not only can learn it and explore it, but also enjoy it." (p.701)

Heathcote also emphasizes the way drama encourages enactment of many different social roles and engages many levels, styles, and uses of language. Language is the central tool and concern for Heathcote, who notes the crucial nature of communication in society and places communication at the center of the educational system.

Other researchers and theorists also attribute many benefits to using drama in the classroom. In *Dramatics and the Teaching of Literature*, James Hoetker (1969) contends that drama increases creativity, originality, sensitivity, fluency, flexibility, emotional stability, cooperation, and examination of moral attitudes, while developing communication skills and appreciation of literature. Hoetker describes drama as a method of better accommodating students whose learning styles are visual or kinesthetic, of teaching critical skills, and of producing aesthetic experiences with literature.

Most of the research on drama in the classroom has been done at the primary level, where drama has been found to improve reading comprehension, persuasive writing, self concepts, and attitudes toward others (Pellegrini and Galda, 1982; Gourgey, 1984; and Wagner, 1987). In her research with high school students, Renée Clift (1983) found that students using dramatic enactment performed as well as students in traditional lecture, discussion, or seatwork modes. Moreover, they experienced more instances of higher order thinking, more topic-specific emotions, decreased apprehension, and less topic-irrelevant thought than students in the non-dramatic mode.

Benefits can be gained with varied applictions

Drama has many applications in the classroom. The teacher may work *in role*, as Dorothy Heathcote (1985) demonstrates, assuming for herself and her students the "mantle of the expert." With this role-playing technique, teacher and students might assume the attitudes and language of present-day scientists planning a Bronze-Age community; or they could become monks who find an ancient manuscript and must decide what should be done with it.

Whether students become the town council in "The Pied Piper" (Tarlington, 1985), government officials in Farley Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf* (Barker, 1988), or representatives of the publishing industry (Martin, 1982), teacher and students collaboratively construct their imaginary world. The gradual construction and exploration of this world results in a better and more personal understanding of the central issues being studied.

Improvisation takes many useful forms besides role playing. Theater guides like Viola Spolin's classic *Improvisation for the Theatre* (1963) provide a wealth of activities, but the most successful improvisations are those derived from the work at hand. For example, a class might dramatize what it is like to be an outsider while reading Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" (Bailey, 1982) or might simulate being survivors on a deserted island before beginning Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (Sheehy, 1982). Catherine Hrybyk's (1983) class improvised a trial of Nora Helmer from Ibsen's *The Doll House*, and Helen Sheehy's (1982) students worked in interpretive groups to enact the ways Nora might

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make her final exit, reflecting all they knew about Nora's character and situation.

Other techniques useful in the classroom are readers' theater and choral readings and writing and producing radio programs, television screenplays, or documentaries. Students develop both an understanding of and appreciation for literary genres and for particular works of fiction by writing scripts from fiction or writing fiction descriptions from play scenes.

Dramatic activity is a useful way to begin a piece of literature or to generate ideas for writing. Drama can encourage students to explore, clarify, and elaborate feelings, attitudes, and ideas. Because drama requires students to organize, synthesize, and articulate their ideas, it provides an excellent opportunity for reflection and evaluation at the conclusion of a unit of study.

The teacher plays the role of facilitator

In using drama in the classroom, the teacher becomes a facilitator rather than an authority or the source of knowledge. Hoetker (1969) warns that "the teacher who too often imposes his authority, or who conceives of drama as a kind of inductive method for arriving at preordained correct answers, will certainly vitiate the developmental values of drama and possibly its educational values as well." (p.28)

Classroom drama is most useful in exploring topics when there are no single, correct answers or interpretations, and when divergence is more interesting than conformity and truth is interpretable. As Douglas Barnes (1968) puts it, "Education should strive not for the acceptance of one voice, but for an active exploration of many voices." (p.3)

As collaborator and guide, the teacher sets the topic and starts things in motion, but the students' choices determine the course the lesson will take. The teacher encourages students to take the major responsibility for giving meaning to the curricular concepts and to communicate them through action, gesture, and dialogue. Heathcote (1983) says that the teacher and students make a journey into new territory together. Cecily O'Neill (1985) writes, "The dramatic world of educational drama is most valuable both educationally and aesthetically when its construction is shared and its meanings negotiated." (p.160)

Constructing shared, negotiated meanings requires that teachers feel secure enough to give students center stage in the classroom. Practitioners advise interested teachers to begin by devising brief activities, to use familiar subject matter, and to resist making hasty judgments. Hoetker (1969) cautions that "development through drama is a gradual, cumulative process, and it is very uncertain what may be the developmental timetable, especially if drama is only an occasional activity." (p.29) However, with practice, teachers of English will discover that the use of drama techniques in the classroom can become a vital part of their teaching repertoire.

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Discourse for Learning in the Classroom

Ken Watson
Bob Young

Teaching is essentially a process of transactional interaction during which, mainly through exploratory talk and writing, students clarify their ideas and forge links between new knowledge and their previous understanding. Some of the interaction occurs in small groups without the teacher, but the teacher's role is often still crucial in organizing resources, in insuring that individuals neither dominate groups nor sit back and let others do the work, in arranging for the sharing of insights between groups. The evidence is clear, however, that in the vast majority of classrooms throughout the English-speaking world the largest proportion of this interaction is to be found in the I.R.F. (Initiative-Response-Feedback) cycle or teacher question-pupil answer-teacher reaction cycle. In many studies more than half the official talk occurs in these cycles. They are the main way in which teachers engage their students in the process of exploration and rehearsal of new material. Where this form of interaction does not occur, it is not usually because some other oral communication, such as small-group work, has replaced it, but because the question/answer reaction pattern has been transferred into written form via the questions at the end of the relevant section of the textbook.

The evidence also suggests that this dominant pattern of classroom dialogue is ill-adapted to real learning, and teachers must take a critical look at current teaching practices.

Typical Classroom Discourse

If one reviews the evidence on teacher questioning, from Romiett Stevens (1912) to the most recent studies, one finds that teachers commonly ask as many as fifty thousand questions a year and their students as few as ten questions each. Further, about 80 percent of teacher questions are likely to call for memory processes only. Barnes (1969), analyzing a series of lessons given to eleven and twelve year olds, found that factual questions predominated even in those lessons where the teacher's aim was to encourage the children to think; one of us found the same patterns of questioning at the highest levels of the secondary school. For example, of nineteen questions asked in one history lesson, only one required more than simple recall of facts. Even where the question itself was apparently an open one, both the form of the question and the teacher's intonation often signalled the required answer, as in this example from an English lesson:

> *Teacher:* „Some people might say that the theme of the play is exploitation. Have we much evidence for that? "
> *Students:* *(in chorus)* No.

With younger children, a great deal of the teacher's questioning, if the transcripts available to us are at all typical, is directed towards correct labelling of phenomena. It is not uncommon to find several pages of transcript devoted to the eliciting of a single word that the teacher has in mind and as an appropriate label for what is being discussed. The severely edited example which follows, arising from a child's reading of some lines from a poem, occupies forty-four lines in the original transcript:

> *Teacher:* Good girl! What did she put into that? Those few words. What did she add? What's the name of it? . . .
> *Pupil:* Strength? . . .
> *Teacher:* . . . The word I am thinking about starts with an *e* . . .
> *Pupil:* Exasperation?
> *Teacher:* I don't think so. Exasperation is when you're annoyed. . . . The question was, "What do you call it when someone is reading something the way X was." She didn't just read the words. She made them much more meaningful, because she added this dimension and it starts with *e*, the word I'm thinking about. There are other words for it. . . .
> *Pupil:* Exclamation?
> *Teacher:* Right. These are all on the right track, but not the one I'm thinking about.
> *Pupil:* *(Inaudible)*
> *Teacher:* *Expression* is the word. Expression!

At times, indeed, one is left with the distinct impression that the label is valued more than the idea behind it.

The pupil response phase of the I.R.F. cycle seems no more satisfactory. Transcript after transcript provides evidence that teachers are content with one- and two-word answers. Rarely do they invite pupils to elaborate on their answers. In a sample of thirty "discussion" lessons, eleven contained no examples of pupils being invited to develop their answers, and only seven had sufficient examples to suggest that the teachers were pursuing a deliberate policy of encouraging pupils to develop their replies (Watson 1980).

A study we undertook of the feedback or teacher reaction phase of the cycle suggests that here, too, teacher behavior may be actively inhibiting learning (Watson and Young 1980). After a pupil has replied to a question, the teacher normally makes an explicit metastatement such as "Good" or "No, that's wrong," and follows this with a statement in which the pupil's reply is repeated or reformulated in some way. We have identified a range of functions in these

reactions: repeating a pupil's response so that everyone may hear; repeating it with positive approval because it is what the teacher wants; partial repetition of those parts the teacher wants to make use of; adding to, generalizing from, replacing terminology in, and otherwise transforming the pupil utterance. Our evidence suggests that in this stage of the cycle many teachers quite unconsciously alter pupil responses to fit their own frames of reference. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from a lesson with a class of thirteen year olds:

1. *Teacher:* Why do people have discussion?
2. *Pupil:* It's just natural, kind of—it's natural.
3. *Teacher:* That's right, it's natural to talk to people about things. But why? Why do people discuss?
4. *Pupil:* 'Cos it's easier than writing it all down on paper. *(Laughter.)*
5. *Teacher:* Yes, it's natural to talk, but I think there's some other reasons too.
6. *Pupil:* To get each other's opinion.
7. *Teacher:* Good, to get each other's opinions.
8. *Pupil:* *(Inaudible)*
9. *Teacher:* All right, and to find out what each other thinks about things and perhaps to come to a . . . *(pause)*
10. *Pupil:* Agreement.
11. *Teacher:* *(Pause)* . . . decision about something. All right, you might have a problem; you discuss it with someone. They might help you to solve it. . . . What about if you're the speaker in the discussion? You're the one everyone's listening to. What sort of rules must you follow?
12. *Pupil:* Sometimes you've got to be careful what you say about people.
13. *Teacher:* All right, you've got to think about what you're going to say.

At two points in this sequence (11 and 13) the teacher has transformed the pupil's response into something different. By rejecting "agreement" and substituting "decision" the teacher is, surely, signalling that the response is deficient in some way. More seriously, perhaps, her response at 13 suggests that she is so enclosed within her own frame of reference that she fails to see that another, equally valid point is being made. Here is another, slightly different, example:

1. *Teacher:* OK What do you think makes the foil spin round and what does that tell us?
2. *Pupil:* The air's getting hot.
3. *Teacher:* The air's getting hot. Yes, that's a very good answer. So what happens to the air? Tony?
4. *Tony:* It goes up and makes the foil spin.
5. *Teacher:* That's right. So for our conclusion what would we write about air? What did we find out about air? . . . hot air? We held the foil above the flame. The foil started to spin when held above the flame. So what does that tell us about hot air? Where does the hot air go? I think Lynette told us.
6. *Lynette:* Um . . . where the foil is.

7. *Teacher:* And where is the foil?
8. *Lynette:* On the stick. *(The aluminum foil was attached to a stick.)*
9. *Teacher:* But what happens to the air?
10. *Lynette:* It gets warm.
11. *Teacher:* Yes, it gets warm and what happens to it then?
12. *Anna:* It rises.
13. *Teacher:* So what happens?
14. *All:* Hot air rises!
15. *Teacher:* Right. So our conclusion is that hot air rises.

In this example, the teacher did not build on the correct but *particular* conclusion advanced by Tony at line 4 but engaged in a long and inefficient exchange aimed at eliciting the general notion (all hot air rises) or at least wording compatible with it, since we may be permitted to doubt whether the point of the exercise was really understood by the pupils. If, instead of focusing on the predecided correct conclusion, the teacher had focused on the pupils' answers, the answers would have been evaluated in their own right, rather than simply for the degree to which they did or did not match the answer the teacher had in mind. A possible move, following up Tony's answer and explicitly seeking the level of generality the teacher wanted, would have been:

Teacher: And do you think the air will *always* go up like that?
Pupil: If it is hot.
Teacher: Fine, would you go and write that on the board.

Even where there is no suggestion that the teacher is ignoring or distorting a pupil's answer to fit it into his or her frame of reference, it often seems that the cognitive work of the lesson is being done by the teacher instead of by the pupils. As has already been noted, relatively few teachers encourage pupils to develop or elaborate on their answers; instead, it is the teacher who does the work of analyzing, generalizing, synthesizing.

Teacher: And how does the boy in the poem feel about these rough boys?
Pupil: He wants to be one of them.
Teacher: Yes, he longs to join them. This is because, isn't it, he not only longs for companionship but because he feels that they are really living, that his parents, by keeping him away from them, are sheltering him from life's experiences, keeping him away from what life is really like. They are depriving him of the experiences that all boys should have.

It seems that the majority of teachers lack faith in their pupils' capacity to be active, constructive participants in their own learning. They feel that they must *tell* the pupils what they must know, *interpret* new knowledge for them, *make explicit* any generalization that can be drawn from the accounts of experience being presented rather than structure classroom experience so that pupils feel a need to develop their own accounts more fully. Even the computer and the video

can also tell, make explicit and interpret—often more vividly than the teacher. They can be (to use Douglas Barnes's term) good teachers of the "transmission" kind (Barnes 1973). But we now know enough about children's learning to make us reject the transmission model of teaching as inadequate.

An Alternative Discourse

The interactive nature of teaching must be informed by a model of classroom communication which recognizes the *active* nature of children's learning, which values exploratory talk and writing as the chief means by which children come to terms with new knowledge, which acknowledges that the links between old knowledge and new must be forged by the learners themselves. The Transmission teacher must be replaced by the Interpretation teacher, who

> will see discussion and writing as ways of helping pupils to think more effectively, and will credit them with the ability to make sense of experiences for themselves by talking and writing about it. For him, knowledge is something that each person will have to make for himself. (Barnes 1973: 14)

The move from Transmission teacher to Interpretation teacher is not an easy one. We suggest that the first step might be a constant encouragement to pupils to develop their answers, so that they are given frequent opportunities to "talk themselves into understanding" (Douglas Barnes's phrase).

Teacher: You're saying that the school environment is a pretty violent one?
Pupil: No, not necessarily, but they see it on television.
Teacher: But that TV tape you saw said that violence on television didn't have much effect on people.
Pupil: But that was just a theory.
Teacher: You really think it does have some effect? OK.
Pupil: I don't think that violence on TV and that, it'd influence us much because, er, we're really old enough to understand that it's going on for much larger issues than just a little difference.
Teacher: And a desire for revenge?
Pupil 2: Yes.
Teacher: Such as Kirk suggested. Is it so much, let me come back to something Kirk suggested before we go on to this wider front, do you think it (violence between students) is for prestige reasons?
Pupil 3: Well, sir, they might not have the verbal . . . er . . . power to express what they want to so they just hit out.
Teacher: Lacking, alright, you're suggesting perhaps where you haven't got the, the verbal skills, is that what you are suggesting?
Pupil 3: Yes.
Teacher: Mark, would you agree with that? From what you said earlier . . . ?
Mark: I would think it was a matter of self-control.

Teacher: You think they lack self-control, so they hit out, rather than lacking the means of an alternative?

Here is a teacher of a year nine class developing a structure of opinion about a poem which deals with children fighting. Note that this teacher is doing three things which, in either the research literature or the body of the transcripts available to the authors, are quite rare: he is keeping track of who "owns" which opinion ("Such as Kirk suggested"), he is checking to see whether his understanding of each opinion is correct ("Is that what you are suggesting?"), and he is building a logical structure into which students can place their views and systematically interrelate them ("So they x rather than y"). We later find the same teacher making these moves:

Teacher: *(after a student has argued that if we didn't fight with our friends, we might do something that would create even more damage)* So vandals who destroy railway carriages are people who haven't got friends to fight with?
Pupil: *(changing his answer)* Aw . . . no, I suppose . . .
Teacher: *(interrupting)* I no, no . . . I'm just trying to get you to test out your generalization . . . er . . . think it out and if you still think it . . .

What is particularly notable about the teacher's final move is that it is a rare example of a teacher making the logical or methodological assumptions of the talk quite explicit. The same may be done for value assumptions, value contrasts, or aesthetic relationships:

Pupil: When people get angry, it's very ugly.
Teacher: You think sometimes it's not nice to see people when they're like that . . . is it, do you think, sometimes people can be beautiful when they're angry?
Pupil: Yes . . . but I don't know, they're still ugly sometimes, too.
Teacher: What's the difference between the ugly and the beautiful angry people? How could we figure this out? Something being angry and beautiful at the same time?

Going even further, the teacher can actively work to relax the degree of conversational control that he or she exerts in the classroom so that it no longer becomes necessary for every response to be channeled through the teacher. It is possible to create a classroom climate in which pupils feel free to respond directly to one another without having to wait for the teacher's evaluative comment. In one of the transcripts available to us, a discussion of a poem, the teacher's conversational control is so relaxed that her question is often followed by comments from four or five pupils before she feels it necessary to intervene again:

Teacher: What are these children (in the poem) doing?
Pupil 1: Writing.

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Pupil 2: And they're really getting into what they're writing about.
Pupil 3: And it's something the teacher didn't have to push onto them.
Pupil 4: Yeah, they're just doing it . . . by themselves.

Thirdly, a critical analysis needs to be made of the textbooks and packaged kits in use in the classroom. Too many of these, especially in the language arts area, simply reinforce the negative aspects of the I.R.F. pattern. (Here it is important to note that the stated rationale of the textbook may prove at odds with the contents. Many of the most widely-used textbooks in the language arts area have introductions proclaiming the most enlightened educational philosophy, and yet the activities and exercises define knowledge in a way which suggests that it is completely objective and factual and discount the value of the pupils' own experience.)

Finally, there needs to be a much wider recognition of the fact that pupils need frequent opportunities to discuss new ideas in small groups. The work of Barnes and Todd (1977) has clearly demonstrated that small-group work can be very productive indeed, training pupils in collaborative learning, helping them to develop hypothetical modes of thinking, teaching them to rely on their own initiative and judgment. Barnes and Todd found that:

> When we played back the recordings to the teachers, their reactions were commonly of surprise and delight. They were surprised because the quality of the children's discussions far exceeded the calibre of their contributions in class; and were pleased to hear the children manifesting unexpected skills and competences. (p. 9)

Barnes and Todd's findings have been partially replicated in a study by Michell and Peel (1977). In that study pupils working in groups were compared with conventional teacher-led discussion and pupil discussion where the teacher acted as "neutral chairperson." The main measures employed were measures of the frequency of "describing" and "explaining," which, although very crude, permit some conclusions about the cognitive level or complexity of talk. The amount of explaining in the pupil groups without a teacher present was much higher than in the conventional teacher-led discussion (of the kind found in many of the examples above), but there was an even higher level of explaining in the groups where teachers acted as "neutral chairpersons," taking responsibility for structure and relevance of the discussion but not for the content. The presence of the teacher may have a value after all! But a note of caution should be sounded. In comparing pupil groups working alone with the teacher-chaired group we may be doing something rather similar to comparing the writing or speaking of a foreign language (generative action) with the reading of it (recognition). The ultimate measure must have to do with what the pupils are capable of by themselves. Just the same, it suggests that an alternation between pupils working alone or in small groups and more actively teacher-structured pupil activities, such as chaired discussions, may be an appropriate strategy. No doubt there is room, too, for a variety of inputs of a more conventional kind, such as films or lectures. The crucial distinctions are not between one kind of activity and another but between situations in which the teacher sensitively provokes further development of the pupil's own active processes of making sense through talk and writing and the kind of situations, which are all too common, where teachers impose their own framework on a stratum of pupil talk artificially elicited for the occasion.

Conclusion

It is not particularly original to suggest that teachers should create more opportunities for students to possess and develop their own ideas in an atmosphere of encouragement. Nor is it unusual to hear it argued that to do this it is essential to provide opportunities for exploratory talk. Perhaps a little less often, we hear it argued that students will learn more quickly and efficiently if they can identify with the ideas they are learning, either fit them into their own frames of reference or recognize a need to change their views. The main trouble with the latter assertion, it is said, is that the presence of structure and organization in the learning materials is also closely related to learning efficiency. To gain the benefits which come from the active involvement of students in building their own world view, along with those that come from well-structured materials, is the aim of every educator.

Teachers may meet current challenges to their effectiveness, at least in part by encouraging *pupils* to deliver more of the materials, while teachers take more responsibility for provoking pupils to improve the quality of their ideas and a similar responsibility for helping them to structure and compare and criticize accounts in the light of their own experience.

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Making Text Talk

The problem of learning through texts is, I believe, fundamentally a problem of translating the patterns of written language into those of spoken language. Spoken language is the medium through which we reason to ourselves and talk our way through problems to answers. It is, for the most part, the medium in which we understand and comprehend.

When we approach written text, we need to be able to do more than just decode letters to sounds. We need to be able to *make sense* of the text, to read it meaningfully, with the voice of interpretation. To comprehend it, we need to be able to paraphrase it, restate it in our own words, and translate its meanings into the more comfortable patterns of spoken language.

This article explores some of the ways teachers and students together make texts "talk" in the classroom. The approach is based on a growing understanding of the social and academic importance of language use patterns in the classroom and the methods of discourse analysis (Bloome & Green, 1984; Cazden, 1985; Green, 1983; Wilkinson, 1982). Discourse analysis provides a specific focus in looking at the functional uses to which teachers and students put language in the classroom. It also offers a theory of how we use language to make sense, including how we explain, interpret, learn, and solve problems (cf. Lemke, 1985b, 1988, in press-a). This encompasses how teachers and students make sense of and to one another and how with language they make sense of texts and their subject-matter content.

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Text, Talk, and Meaning

There are two senses in which we make text talk in the classroom. First, we can read text out loud and give it a turn-at-talk, as a teacher question or a student answer. In this sense the text becomes an invisible (but now audible) participant in classroom dialogue, providing a functional role. Second, we can "talk out" the text, by contributing to its thematic content, in the sense of elaborating and commenting on it in our own words. Only in this second sense can we truly bring the text to life by giving it a "voice" that is not just audible but also fully meaningful.

The distinction between the functional role of what we say in classroom dialogue (e.g., question, answer, evaluation, or admonition) and its thematic contribution, i.e., what it adds to the fabric of conceptual meaning that the dialogue is weaving, is fundamental to the analysis of classroom discourse. Procedurally, classroom dialogue follows fairly definite rules that define the sequences of actions that both teachers and students come to expect. One particular sequence of action usually dominates: teacher preparation for question, teacher question, student bids to answer, teacher nomination of student to answer, student answer, teacher evaluation of answer, teacher elaboration of answer (and then the sequence repeats). Many studies have identified this basic pattern and variations on it (e.g., Lemke, 1983a; Mehan, 1979; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975).

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The pattern is much the same from one subject area to another. It describes the procedural half of what is going on in classroom dialogue, and provides a structure or scaffold on which teacher-student interaction is supported.

The other half of what is going on in classroom dialogue tells us what these questions and answers are *about*. How are the conceptual relationships of the subject-matter content, be it science or history, built up through what is said in the dialogue—the procedural scaffolding? On this scaffolding, teachers and students build what I have called the *thematic patterns* of the subject (Lemke, 1982, 1983a, 1983b, 1985a). Thematic patterns can be thought of as the basic concept relations of a topic, expressed always in language, but often in somewhat different words from one occasion to another. For example, electrons are always "in" or "part of" an atom, but this can be said in many ways. However it is said, the same semantic relationships are built with different words, and those basic relationships are the elements of the thematic pattern of this topic. It has often been noted that students master the procedural patterns of the classroom far better than they do the thematic patterns of the subject matter (e.g., Puro & Bloome, 1987).

Classroom dialogue, of course, is not the only place where the thematic patterns of a subject are found. Any textbook of the subject tries to present those same patterns. The tests we give students, especially when combined with the desired answers, also show these same patterns. Abstractly, these patterns are always semantic patterns expressed in language. They tell us how to use the special terms of the subject matter in relation to one another and to other subjects when we formulate sentences and paragraphs. They define a kind of fluency in speaking and writing the language of the subject that we recognize as mastery of the use of its fundamental concepts and principles.

Language patterns are emphasized here because we know more about the semantics of language than about any other human resource for making meaning. Many thematic patterns can also be expressed in the language of mathematics or through various kinds of diagrams, but the semantics of language seems to form a common denominator for all other systems (see Lemke, 1987, on language, gesture, and diagram).

The following sections examine some key moments in one classroom when the teacher and the students are trying to make written text talk.[1] They are going over a series of homework questions taken from the end of a chapter in their science book. Each question is read out loud by the teacher. Some of the answers are also read by students from their homework papers, and these answers in turn were copied verbatim from the textbook. The concern is with how the teacher and students succeed and fail in making the texts they read out loud really talk to them, i.e., become part of their dialogue procedurally and, more important, thematically.

Text as a Participant

The following exchange between teacher and students as they begin to go over the homework questions is fairly typical:

Teacher: Question number 7 . . . *a.* "What-is-an-electron-cloud?" Sheldon?

Sheldon: "The portion of space about a nuculus [sic] in which the electrons may most probably be found."

Teacher: Fine. These are kind of representational diagrams of electron cloud theory. Of course, that's like most of the time, Sheldon said.

Procedurally, at the point where we pick up the dialogue, we expect a teacher preparation and teacher question. What we get is slightly different. The preparation move by the teacher, which normally sets the topical or thematic context for the question, here only identifies it by number. The question itself both is and is not a true teacher question. While it fills its place and function, it is not the teacher's *own* question. These are not his own words, nor is the pattern of rhythm and intonation normal for him. The words are placed in quotation marks to indicate that they are *read* rather than simply *said*. The teacher further distances himself from these words by speaking them in a rapid staccato with little pitch variation in his voice (indicated by the hyphenation). Voice features like these regularly distinguish the teacher's own questions from those he reads aloud (Lemke, 1983b, in press-b).

When Sheldon is nominated to answer the question, he reads his answer, which is copied from the book. He reads this unfamiliar textbook language slowly and deliberately, unlike his normal way of speaking, and even stumbles over the pronunciation of *nucleus*. The teacher treats Sheldon's answer as a normal student answer, procedurally, by giving it a positive evaluation ("Fine."). The teacher then elaborates on the answer at length.

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This pattern has been described as "external text dialogue" (Lemke, 1983a, in press-b). It follows the same basic procedural pattern as ordinary classroom dialogue, but an external text, like some outside voice, takes some of the functional roles normally filled by the human participants in the dialogue. In this example, and by means of this procedural pattern generally, the textbook has been made an invisible participant in the dialogue. At a later point, when a textbook question asks "Why?" a student and then the teacher says, "Why do they ask 'Why'?" The invisible participant (here personified as the textbook's authors) can be directly referred to in the third person.

In these and other ways, teachers and students integrate the words of the textbook into familiar functional roles in the classroom dialogue pattern. But what of its thematic role? Its place in the patterns of meaning the dialogue is developing? This is problematic because the language of the textbook is certainly not the students' language, and very often it is not like the usual classroom language of teachers either. Nonetheless, one of the goals of the curriculum, surely, is to make this formal language of science at least a part of the students' language capabilities.

In his elaboration on the read answer, the teacher begins the process of bridging between the formal language of the textbook and the customary language of his students. His use of the colloquial markers "kind of" and "like" as well as his conversion of "most probably" into "most of the time" help to translate the thematic relations of the subject matter into more familiar forms of expression. He also translates in the other direction, replacing the more familiar sounding "portion of space" with the more formal "representational diagram" to identify the nature of "electron cloud." These moves continually restate the unfamiliar in more familiar terms and vice versa, helping to integrate the language of the textbook not just procedurally but now also thematically into the dialogue. The teacher helps the students invest that language with meaning by showing them how to connect it to other language.

Discourse analysis shows us that what something means to us depends essentially on which contexts we connect it with. It leads us beyond the immediate contexts of what was just said or read to the associations we make with what we have heard or read, said or written, in other times and places. This principle of *intertextuality* tells us that what any written or spoken words say to us depends on what we bring to reading or hearing them. To truly make text talk in the classroom, teachers and students must build semantic connections between the words of the text and other already familiar ways of speaking. More than this, they must become familiar with speaking the more formal language of the subject and must integrate it into their own ways of speaking.

Talking Science

The teacher can only do so much by showing students how to translate between more and less familiar ways of expressing the same thematic pattern in words. The students need to practice joining in speaking the new language. They need to make the text talk in their own voices, not by reading it, but by elaborating on it themselves, building on it in their own words, and making its words their own. Unfortunately, the procedural patterns of most classrooms do not give students much opportunity to do this.

In the 11 minutes this class spent going over the homework questions from the book, 17 textbook questions and five supplementary teacher's questions were posed and answered. Of the 17, nine called for and received one-word answers from students, with no elaboration. Two more might have offered more scope for extended answers, but still were answered in a single word or phrase. Of the remaining six, which did call for extended answers by students, three answers had been copied from the book and were read out, one answer was nonverbal, and only two were spontaneous and extended. Of the five supplementary questions by the teacher, four called for and received one-word answers and only one elicited an extended reply. Just once, a student spontaneously offered a comment that used technical language.

The pattern described is in no way unique to this teacher. Even when given the opportunity, students are reluctant to try speaking the language of the subject. They would rather answer with a single word, which requires no explicit semantic connections and no possible errors of syntax or usage. They would rather read aloud the textbook's language or answer with a gesture and no language at all. These are not poor students; they are, in fact, close to being honors students. However, their level of development in terms of being able to use the language of science to say what they want to say is about at the same stage as a young child who cannot form sentences and communicates by using single words fit into the context of a dialogue

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with an adult. This arrested development testifies to the limited opportunities generally provided students to talk the language of the subjects they study.

The following example demonstrates how classroom dialogue *can* help make the language of the textbook part of the language of the students. The dialogue centers around the textbook question that asks which energy level for electrons in an atom is the first one in which the electrons can be found in a dumbbell-shaped "cloud" (P-type orbital). Energy level one (also called the K-shell) has only spherical "clouds"; level two (the L-shell) has both spherical and dumbbell-shaped ones.

Teacher: "What is the lowest energy level having P orbitals?" *Natalie.*
Natalie: P orbitals?
Teacher: Yeah.
Natalie: Uh . . . level one.
Teacher: Level one only has an S.
Natalie: Level two.
Teacher: Level two, which is the L-shell. OK. You know why, Natalie?
Natalie: P only has one S.
Teacher: *P* only has one S?
Natalie: I mean . . .
Teacher: *K* has—
Natalie: *K.* K has . . . (2 sec) one S. L has . . . one S, and three P's.

After the teacher reads the textbook question, he nominates Natalie, even though she had not raised her hand. She stalls, and/or double checks that she heard the question correctly. The teacher confirms her on the question and she hesitates, then answers incorrectly. In the context of the preceding questions, this is not an especially difficult one. The teacher does not give an explicit negative evaluation of her answer, but instead tells her that "level one only has an S," implying therefore that it cannot have a P-orbital. Natalie's answer had been a typical one-word answer; she had not actually had to say "Level one has [one or more] P-orbitals," which might have sounded wrong to her in relation to the thematics of the subject. In any case, the teacher's comment, coming in place of a hoped-for positive evaluation, signals that her answer must have been wrong, whether she understands the implication of the comment or not. She next answers "Level two," which is the next most likely answer to guess. The teacher now gives a positive evaluation in his usual way (by repeating a correct answer), and follows with a brief elaboration.

But the teacher does not immediately go on to the next question. Natalie could have been guessing, so he asks her if she knows why her second answer was correct. Now for the first time she constructs a complete sentence, trying to express the correct semantic relationships of this thematic pattern.

The basic pattern being discussed is as follows:

ENERGY LEVELS (1, 2, etc.) or SHELLS (K, L, etc.)
—HAVE—
[Nos. of] (S-, P-, etc.) ORBITALS

Each numbered energy level (1, 2, 3, etc.) is synonymous with the "shell" labeled by the corresponding letter (K, L, M, etc.). Levels, or shells, are said to have some number of S-type orbitals, some number of P-type orbitals, etc. That number can be zero. When Natalie tries her first complete sentence she uses an ORBITAL letter, P, in place of a SHELL letter, so she is saying that one ORBITAL HAS another ORBITAL, which doesn't fit the pattern at all. The teacher questions this, emphasizing the mistaken P. As she begins to restate, the teacher prompts her with the right letter, "K has . . . ." Natalie first confirms the K, as easy as a one-word answer. Then, very slowly and with great care, she puts together a first sentence ("K has one S"), which uses the terms correctly according to the pattern. It is a paraphrase of the teacher's original hint to her. Having gotten the pattern, Natalie continues. This time she more readily constructs a more difficult sentence with more content than before ("L has one S, and three P's.").

Natalie is talking science and making sense. She is talking out the same thematic pattern underlying the textbook question and the teacher's hint. But now the hint has become more than just a signal to guess another likely answer, it has become another model for that same thematic pattern. Natalie does not *copy* either model; she speaks the *pattern*, assisted by the discourse structure of the dialogue.

Dialogue and Comprehension

Making text talk means learning to speak its thematic patterns. This is why we recognize students' ability to restate a sentence or passage in their own words as the surest sign of comprehension—provided that we recognize the same underlying semantic pattern in their words that we hear in the text. Even when students simply read

aloud, we judge from their rhythms and intonations whether they are speaking the same meaning relationships among words, phrases, and clauses that we believe best make sense of the text. The text is most fully a participant in the dialogue when students make it their own—not only by reading it aloud or speaking it in their own words, but by elaborating and commenting on it, and perhaps even connecting it to contexts different from those given by their teacher (cf. Bernhardt, 1987).

In the following example, the dialogue integrates the text not only procedurally but thematically into the shared language of teachers and students.

Teacher: And . . . *12*: "Distinguish between an atom in its ground state . . . and an *excited* atom." *Mario.*

Mario: "When an atom is in its ground state, its electrons hold the lowest possible energy. When an atom is in— when, when an atom is excited, it absorbs energy; therefore an excited atom holds more energy than an atom at its ground state."

Teacher: OK. What you're saying . . . Anybody else say it differently? [to Mario] You know what you're saying? . . . *Cheryl.*

Cheryl: Um . . . the ground state is at a lower energy . . .

Teacher: No *added* energy. Yeah?

Cheryl: and the excited is . . .

Teacher: You *add* something, like thermal energy, like heat. Electrons jump to another shell, another kind of higher energy orbit . . . and uh . . . they're *excited.*

The question and Mario's answer both read the language of the textbook. The teacher accepts the answer, but questions whether Mario *understands* what he has said, i.e., the extent to which Mario has made this kind of language and its underlying thematic patterns his own. He asks if anyone can "say it differently," i.e., put the same thematic pattern into different (preferably their own) words. This ought to be extremely difficult for students who are new to this particular and rather difficult concept. Number 12 is the last and hardest of the homework questions.

Cheryl starts to answer. The teacher interrupts her to paraphrase what she is saying in more familiar language, then prompts her to continue and completes a sentence for her using the more familiar vocabulary ("You add something"). There hasn't really been a student answer here, but a joint teacher-student answer, and so there is no evaluation. The teacher shifts smoothly into elaboration, giving yet another way of verbalizing the pattern, mixing colloquial and technical language. After all this, he asks a supplementary question about what happens when the electrons "fall back" (cf. "jump to") and gets an answer ("They . . . uh . . . lose energy") that shows at least one student has learned to match these different verbalizations to the same thematic pattern.

Discourse analysis reminds us that comprehension is the ability to speak the pattern, rather than merely copy the model. It makes us look more closely at what we as teachers can do to construct dialogues in which students are enabled to speak subjects *with* us that they could not speak on their own. It emphasizes the importance of teaching students to speak (and write) subjects fully, at length, and with words and meaning patterns they have made their own.

Silent attention is a sign of respect and a convenience of mass education, but "talk-on-task" is what leads to learning. It is not enough that students answer questions; the teacher has usually already done the work of organizing language into one of the acceptable semantic patterns of the subject matter just in asking the question. Students need to learn to do that for themselves. Above all they need practice at doing it.

While dialogue can preempt students' opportunities to speak the thematic patterns of the subject, it can also provide a structure within which to articulate what they could not have said on their own. It can enmesh them in multiple verbalizations of the same pattern, bridging between formal and colloquial language, and pushing them on toward the abstract thematic pattern that aligns these sensibly with one another. Finally it can give them the support they need to venture further by elaborating and commenting on the basic statements, speaking *more* of the pattern.

To make texts talk, we need to help students fully speak their meanings, out loud. We need to help students *talk* their way to comprehension.

Note

1. The transcripts are taken from Lemke (1983b).

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tip

The Relation Between Creative Drama and Oral Language Growth

JOHN WARREN STEWIG and NEIL J. VAIL

Advocates of creative drama have long extolled its virtues. The psychological, social, self-concept, and creativity outcomes have been detailed at length (Stewig, 1982). Despite such advocacy, experiences in informal classroom drama are not a regularly recurring part of most curricula. Though enthusiastic about drama, classroom teachers find little time to have children dramatize (Littig, 1975).

In an effort to establish a priority for drama, some writers have described the language outcomes of drama. Such descriptions are largely theoretic, as research to discover the relation between informal dramatics and growth in child language is limited (Fordyce, 1975). If research documentation was available, more teachers might include creative drama as part of their curricula.

This study replicates two earlier studies (Stewig & Young, 1978; Stewig & McKee, 1980). In fourth- and seventh-grade students, oral language improved significantly after twenty creative drama lessons. Commonly used measures of language maturation, including total number of words generated, total number of T-units*, total clause output, and type-token ratio, all showed increases significant at the .01 level. A limitation of these studies was that constraints in the school systems prevented using matched control groups. Results were thus within group measures of improvement, though clearly between-group comparisons would give stronger support for including informal classroom drama as a part of the language arts program. Such a study became possible because of the awarding of a Title IV-C grant.

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The Setting

The Racine, Wisconsin, Unified School District is the state's second largest consolidated district, serving a population of 23,000 students. It has all the financial and personnel advantages customarily available in large urban districts, and also some of the disadvantages of such districts.

The personnel advantages included the project director, the language arts coordinator for the district, a thoroughly knowledgeable professional, trained paraprofessional data coders, and a talented director of research.

The disadvantages also reflect the district's metropolitan nature. We finished the study with a far smaller number of subjects than we began with, due to the often-described mobility of urban students. We worked carefully within tight constraints established by an influential teachers' union, which monitors all in-school activities for possible infractions.

The Subjects

Our choice of subjects was influenced by guidelines for Title IV-C proposals; we replicated previous studies at the seventh grade level and included a small number of gifted students in the experimental group. At the conclusion of the study, we had usable data from 32 experimental subjects, of which 10 were gifted. The control subjects numbered 40.

The Design

The design of this study mirrored the two earlier ones featuring pre- and post-tests, with 20 intervening lessons in creative drama as the treatment. Previous experience had shown that using a visual motivation as a stimulus to oral story retelling was an effective task for students at various grade and ability levels. Recording students' oral language on tape for later transcription was a man-

ageable way to gather oral data from a large number of subjects.

As in the first study, we used a film with the audio portion turned off, to motivate the oral language. A pair of live action films by the same manufacturer were chosen because they were of comparable length and subject matter in an attempt to control for this variable ("Hansel and Gretel" and "Rapunzel," both from Tom Davenport Films, Delaplain, Virginia). The pretesting was done in September.

Seventh-grade subjects were asked to view the film, and told before viewing that their task afterward would be to retell the story to a kindergarten child, while recording the retelling so their teacher could listen to it later. The kindergarteners who had not seen the film were randomly assigned by their teacher to the seventh graders. No other observers were present during the retelling task. Thus, the oral samples were gathered in a relatively tension-free context in which students were performing a language task that seemed a logical use of their abilities.

Our intent was to explore how drama might be integrated into an already existing language arts curriculum rather than being added as a separate subject.

The storytelling proceeded smoothly; despite careful monitoring some of the pretest stories were lost due to an undetected faulty tape recorder. This, in addition to the high student mobility factor as students transferred to other schools or out of the district, diminished the final sample size. During the experiment, control group subjects continued with the prescribed school district language arts program which emphasizes literature, composition, and grammar. There is no specified drama component in the program. Since the control group teachers had no drama experience, the control group students received no drama instruction.

The experimental group received the drama treatment using materials described in the following section. In May, after 20 lessons had been taught, students were tested in the same way, and the two sets of transcriptions forming the data base were analyzed.

The Materials

For this study, a set of 20 creative drama lessons was developed by a classroom teacher who had had three semesters course work in creative drama. (A complete set of these plans is available at cost from the second author.)

Our intent was to explore how drama might be integrated into an already existing language arts curriculum rather than being added as a separate subject. Unlike some districts, a carefully articulated, wide-ranging language arts curriculum has been in place for several years. The curriculum, based on current thinking in the discipline, is revised regularly to incorporate new knowledge. Teachers are provided significant, recurring amounts of inservice to help them teach the curriculum effectively.

The author of the session plans based the sequence on two components of the district language program. One was the commercial literature textbook adopted by the junior high school teachers; the other was the district-produced language grammar curriculum guide. It is commonly understood in this district that teachers are to use these two materials. We anticipated less teacher resistance to a drama sequence based on these prescribed materials than to one unrelated to the current curriculum. Thus, the lesson author chose topics and materials which could be most effectively adapted to drama techniques. In addition, as the second author of one of the previous studies, she was well acquainted with the desired oral language emphasis, and was able to write into the lesson plans many suggestions for verbal activities.

Verbal emphasis was three-fold. First, each lesson detailed ways children should discuss the material and drama possibilities before beginning. Second, the body of each lesson provided many possible verbal activities related to the actual physical playing of the idea. Third, each lesson included follow-up questions to be used in a concluding evaluation discussion. It was this last element that experimental group teachers found most difficult to incorporate into a rigid daily time schedule dictated by the departmentalized setting. In an attempt to do the suggested lesson activities, teachers found themselves short of time to use the evaluation questions.

Experimental group teachers were encouraged to adapt any lesson or change lesson order if they could, thus making it more appropriate for their group. Discussion during inservice sessions showed that though both teachers made some minor modifications of lesson strategy and sequence, neither made major changes.

The 20 lessons were taught between September and May, an extended time planned to avoid the limitation of extremely brief treatment periods in some other drama studies. Despite this seemingly long period of time, vagaries of departmentalized scheduling, and such unanticipated all-school functions as assemblies, caused teachers to complete the lessons just in time for the May post-testing.

The Teachers

Two teachers volunteered to teach the experimental classes. Neither had ever had a course in informal classroom drama, or used it in their classrooms. In retro-

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spect, we should have used attitude inventories with the teachers, as the change in these teachers' expressed attitudes over the course of a year was significant.

We were concerned about the inexperienced teachers' abilities to implement these lessons, despite their familiarity with the content culled from the existing language arts curriculum. Therefore, we provided a day of inservice before they began teaching. It is plain that this was not adequate preparation even though schedule restraints and the need to pay union scale for the teachers' inservice seemed to make it a wise decision.

During the year, the teachers and I met every third week for after school inservice sessions. As a follow-up to questions they raised, I often sent related materials to them, though the realities of teaching six classes a day precludes much time for reading. In addition to reading materials I provided, the school district maintains an extensive professional library, an optional source for further research for the teachers. The language arts coordinator in the school system was available for questions or additional materials.

Results

Transcripts of the children's oral speech were taken from the tapes by a professional typist and coded by paraprofessionals in the research division of the participating school district. Prior to actual coding, paraprofessionals were trained by the researchers until a satisfactory level of inter-rater reliability was achieved. Analysis of the data revealed the following.

1. Total verbal output (or number of words) was a measure used on the basis of Loban's (1963) recommendation of verbal output as an indication of language development. Unfortunately, when the experimental group was compared with the control group, there were no significant differences between groups. There was significant growth in the total number of words produced within the experimental group; comparable growth occurred within the control group.

2. Words per T-unit* was a measure used in this study not investigated in earlier studies. The length of sentences is also commonly regarded as a measure of language growth. Totally unexpected was the significantly greater growth in T-unit length which occurred in the control group, not in the experimental group. Apparently, some aspect of the district language program developed longer sentences than did the drama experiences.

3. Total T-unit output is identified by Hunt (1975) as a measure of language growth. Results here were mixed. There was a significantly greater increase among the small gifted sample of only ten students, compared with the control group, but not among the non-gifted when compared with the control group. Gifted pupils did increase their T-unit output as a result of this experience with informal classroom drama.

4. Type-token ratio, a commonly used measure of language diversity (Jensen, 1973), showed no significant differences between the experimental and the control group. The experience with classroom drama did not result in greater diversity for the experimental group despite the emphasis in the drama lesson plans on vocabulary development.

The best that can be said about this matched-group experiment is that, on the measures used, drama students did no worse than the control groups.

Discussion

Several constraints probably influenced the outcome of this study. The experimental classes were taught by two inexperienced teachers who might have been more effective drama leaders had they been more thoroughly trained before beginning the project. In the two previous studies, teachers had considerably more drama experience before beginning the lessons.

A departmentalized junior high may not have been the best place to experiment. Teachers commented on the frequent schedule interruptions and expressed the feeling students would have learned more if the lessons had been given in blocks or units on consecutive days. This is one of several intuitive feelings which surfaced during the inservice sessions which must remain speculative as we did not gather any data about this aspect of the project. Each of the teachers in the two previous studies had more schedule flexibility as they were teaching in self-contained classrooms. In addition, because the two previous teachers were with their children all day, they may have unconsciously reinforced the outcomes of the drama lessons. The teachers in this study saw their students for just one hour a day, so incidental reinforcement was impossible.

A different sort of teacher variable may also have been at work. In another school setting, perhaps the experimental group teachers could also teach the control groups, which would minimize the impact of teacher differences, focusing instead on the method itself.

The stimulus films may have affected the outcomes of this study. We chose to use "Rapunzel" first, and the "Hansel and Gretel" film for the post-test. On reflection, it is apparent that "Rapunzel" is more difficult to interpret, thus children used more words to retell it than they did to retell "Hansel and Gretel." It is also possible that being more familiar with "Hansel and Gretel," the subjects did not see the necessity to explain it as fully as they did "Rapunzel." Clearly, a better solution would

be to find two films both of which are unfamiliar to all the subjects.

Another problem may have affected the outcome. Many drama leaders believe that speech flows more freely when everyone in class can be involved at the same time, minimizing the inhibiting effects of an audience. The only classrooms available, however, were of a size which precluded total group involvement simultaneously. Would more fluent oral language have developed if students hadn't needed to wait for their group to participate? In the two previous studies, teachers had a gymnasium in which to teach the lessons.

Conclusions

The results of this study are equivocal. We have a very mixed picture of the influence of these classroom drama lessons on students' oral language growth. Previous single class experiments had supported the hypothesis that involving students in drama influences the amount of oral development. The best that can be said about this matched-group experiment is that, on the measures used, drama students did no worse than the control groups. Significant oral language growth occurred in both groups. Those in the experimental group were not harmed by spending time in drama, instead of in the more conventional program which emphasized reading, oral questioning/discussion, and writing responses to the lessons. Perhaps this finding will help teachers interested in drama. A commonly given reason for not including drama is lack of time. This study demonstrates that time can be taken from the regular language arts program and given to drama, without adverse effect in the development of students' oral language.

NOTE

*T-units are the shortest grammatically allowable sentences into which discourse can be segmented.

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ERIC® CLEARINGHOUSE ON READING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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Storytelling: Its Wide-Ranging Impact in the Classroom

by Nola Kortner Aiex

Storytelling is a creative art form that has entertained and informed across centuries and cultures (Fisher, 1985), and its instructional potential continues to serve teachers. Storytelling, or oral literature, has many of its roots in the attempt to explain life or the mysteries of the world and the universe—to try to make sense out of things (Tway, 1985). In doing so, the characters and themes in the stories have become cultural and often cross-cultural archetypes of historic and continuing importance (Lasser, 1979). Even in today's technological world, we have not changed to such a degree that the archetypes presented in traditional oral literature are no longer applicable (Livo and Rietz, 1986).

Rosen (1986) enumerates several factors about the universality of narrative that merit consideration: 1) human beings dream and speak to themselves in narrative (inner narrative speech); 2) a basic form of narrative is not only telling but also retelling; and 3) narrative is oral in the sense that an individual can engage with it fully without encountering it in written form. Storytelling, probably the oldest form of narrative in the world, is not the same as reading aloud, because in storytelling, the interaction between teller and listener is immediate, personal, active, and direct. Preece (1987) discusses 14 narrative forms which children use routinely and regularly.

Storytelling in the classroom

In 1984, the commission on Literature of the National Council of Teachers of English applauded an emerging trend in schools and communities which emphasizes storytelling as literature (Suhor, 1984). Numerous articles entered in the ERIC database between 1985 and 1988 discuss the benefits of storytelling in developing language abilities, appreciation of literature, critical thinking and comprehension, and understanding of community and self.

In discussing how storytelling involves the control of language for narrative, for example, Wyatt, *et al.* (1986) describe the application of storytelling in teaching children to write as though they were doing so for media. Alparaque (1988) notes another important benefit related to the development of the appreciation of literature—the power of storytelling to bind attention and to bridge real and imaginary worlds.

George and Schaer (1986) investigated the effects of three mediums for presenting literature to children and discovered that storytelling and dramatization were significantly more effective in facilitating recall of prose content than was television. These findings indicted that storytelling is a viable method for stimulating children's imaginations, ultimately leading to a higher cognitive level in student responses. Reinehr (1987) discusses ways to use mythic literature to teach children about themselves and to help them write their own stories and legends. For very young children, the sequencing of events or the shaping of stories may be difficult, as children tend to ramble. However, sharing stories can give youngsters more of a "sense of story"—an awareness that can help them in both reading and writing. In reading, for example, a sense of story can help children to predict and know what to expect, and to read with more awareness of cause and effect, sequence and other story factors related to comprehension (Kempter, 1986; Trabasso and Van Den Broek, 1985). In writing, children learn to apply such structures while telling their own stories and giving shape to their experiences (Tway, 1985).

Perhaps storytelling's greatest value for a teacher is its effectiveness in fostering a relaxed and intimate atmosphere in the classroom. Scott (1985), an experienced Australian teacher/storyteller, explains how this practical and general objective can relate to the other benefits from using storytelling: It can 1) introduce children to a range of story experiences; 2) provide young students with models of story patterns, themes, characters, and incidents to help them in their own writing, oral language, and thinking; 3) nurture and encourage a sense of humor in children; 4) help put children's own words in perspective; 5) increase knowledge and understanding of other places, races, and beliefs; 6) introduce new ideas and be used to question established concepts without threat to the individual; 7) lead to discussions that are far ranging and often more satisfying than those arising from formal lessons; and 8) serve as the most painless way of teaching children to listen, to concentrate, and to follow the thread and logic of an argument.

Some aids for effective storytelling

To build children's storytelling skills, Plourde (1985) recommends activities that focus on role playing, generating character, helping students find an appropriate voice, and developing the ability to make logical conclusions. Plourde elaborates on a dozen techniques appropriate for children in kindergarten through grade 6. One, for example, has the teacher or one child relate the beginning of a familiar fairy tale and another child make up an entirely new ending.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (1984) offers several suggestions for making

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low-cost crafts materials that facilitate storytelling. Among them is the construction of a simple mini-cinema illustrating sequential events of a story. These stages of the story may then be presented with a flexible strip of drawings operated by pulling a string.

Gross and Batchelder (1986) present exercises for older elementary and middle school students designed to improve group dynamics and create a learning environment for storytelling. One technique involves using a circle to practice games inspired by modern dance education and native American rituals. These exercises help older students who are apt to be self conscious to become more confident, willing to participate, and supportive of the storytelling process.

Music—classical or popular, recorded or live—can also be used to set the scene for storytelling, as can puppets and other simple props. But effective storytelling is a versatile strategy that stirs the imagination and enables children to visualize with few or no visual aids at all.

The classroom teacher as storyteller

For a classroom teacher who wishes to use storytelling, it is best to begin by choosing a simple story with only a few characters and an uncomplicated plot. The story should have action, the plot should be understandable to the listeners, and the events of the story should have a definite climax that leads to a conclusion the students will find satisfactory.

Folk and fairy tales are the easiest kinds of stories for beginning storytellers to communicate (Ramey, 1986; Taub, 1984). In selecting these or any story, it is important to keep in mind the age of the children in the audience. Scott (1985) advises the storyteller to be flexible, to expect unexpected reactions, and to remember that enjoyment should be the first and chief consideration.

Scott and other researchers emphasize that a storyteller need not be a "performer," but rather a person who has good memory and listening skills, who sincerely likes the story chosen for telling, and who knows the story so well that it can be recreated for an audience without any uncertainty or panic. Storytellers who are too "actorish" usually fascinate the audience, but at the expense of the story.

The second consideration in effective storytelling should be to encourage exploration and experimentation with language (Schwartz, 1987). Constructing meaning through use of language is an implicit goal in storytelling. A language development focus can recommend retelling. Stories that are told and retold develop a patina with each new telling. Children's participation in storytelling provides not only novelty to stimulate the child's curiosity, but also enough familiarity to allow a child to perceive relationships and to experience success at using language (Wason-Ellam, 1986).

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Talking to Learn Subject Matter/ Learning Subject Matter Talk

Kathleen S. Berry

Expressive language shapes and "maps out" our learning (Britton 1970) and serves as the developmental base for growing effectiveness in communication, since using language to learn always involves learning language (Vygotsky 1962). In contrast to this out-of-school picture of children controlling and exercising powerful means for *learning*, a significant body of research dismally portrays classrooms—across age levels, across the curriculum, and across the English-speaking world—in which students' language use is greatly limited in quantity and purpose by a controlling, transmission-of-knowledge model of teaching (e.g., Barnes 1976; Bellack et al. 1966; Mehan 1979; Sinclair and Coulthardt 1975). Interaction during lessons remains largely restricted to a classic triad pattern of (1) teacher initiates—(2) student responds—(3) teacher evaluates. In sum, a restricted environment for student language and learning.

In response to this disparity, more and more teachers have tried to create elaborated language and learning environments in their classrooms. Indeed, while many teachers are often surprised at what children can do generally in directing their own language use and learning, they often cannot describe or explain exactly what it is that children are doing as they language to learn, especially as they talk. Only a very few studies (e.g., Barnes and Todd 1977; Searle 1981) have begun to explore in more detail how children's "language" shapes their experience and structures their knowledge. Such was my intent as I analyzed the language and learning of grade five students in small group discussions dealing with various tasks across the elementary curriculum.

Yet, before looking more carefully at what the children were doing, I would like to introduce Maggie. She is twelve years old, lanky, energetic, and dressed like a lot of her peers (blue jeans, sloganed sweat shirts, dog-eared runners, and sticker tattoos on her arms). Maggie has lots of friends. She is the first to run up to the teachers in the hall or to her fellow students with news, plans, questions, or enthusiastic chatter. When Maggie sits in class, she secretly talks to her friends, frequently raises her hand to respond to teacher questions, and rarely misses an opportunity to rush to her teacher for private conversations. According to her teacher, Maggie talks so much that she barely finishes her work. When Maggie talks about school work, she seems to be confused or introduces information irrelevant to the topic.

Maybe you have a Maggie in your classroom. Maybe you have all the extremes between Maggie and the nontalkative student. I introduced you to Maggie so that when you are reading about talk and learning, you will keep Maggie in your mind's eye. I hope you can consider how Maggie and other students can be examples of recent theories on language and learning, yet how in practice they tend to be the victims of limited, low quality language use in the classroom. You will soon hear Maggie participating in a group discussion on tasks set by her teacher but without the teacher's presence. Her use of language "beyond the triad" will provide insights into how one student uses talk to learn. Because of space restrictions, I will share with you the language and learning of only one group on one social studies task, especially Maggie's language and learning.

The Nature of the Task

The grade five social studies curriculum in effect in Maggie's classroom includes socio-historical aspects of life that make demands on students' understandings. The concepts to be learned are removed in time, space, and knowledge from the students' present day lives. The specific task given the students here required them to make sense of economic terminology (i.e., monopoly, supply and demand, cost of production) and the relationship of these economic concepts to other factors surrounding the fur trade in early Canada.

The nature of the task can implicitly determine how the students will use their language to learn. Sometimes the nature of the task may provide implicit limitations on the use of language elaboration, clarification, or modification.

In the first social studies task, Maggie and her group were required to discuss: "(1) What does exploration mean? (2) What does discovery mean?" Given the opportunity to discuss freely, especially without the presence of a teacher, it might be expected that Maggie and the others would use their language extensively. However, they appeared to keep within a very limited structure. Their expectations of the nature of the task—to define—seemed to restrict the discussants to the framework of a dictionary definition. The following example tends to be typical of a definition task.

> *Maggie:* What does discovery mean? Okay, ah . . . I think discovery means . . . when . . . when you find something you discover land or . . . discover something.
> *Chris:* No, when you find something . . . That no one has before . . . nobody knows it.
> *Laura:* Yeah, you just discover it.
> *Maggie:* Does anybody else have anything else . . .
> *Chris:* What does exploration mean?
> *Maggie:* Something to do with exploring . . .
> *Chris:* When you explore something . . . like you explore a tree or something.
> *Maggie:* You go explore something . . . something to do with . . . street.

In most cases, the students never went beyond a brief sentence in responding to this task. There was never much conflict over the task. The students seemed to reach a consensus that, once one person gave the definition, there was no need for further discussion. The students usually proceeded to the next task or signified they had finished the task.

Depth of Understanding Through Talking

At times, the students did attempt expansion of conceptual meanings by using their language to learn. When they went beyond the usual restrictive structure of a definition, an evolutionary aspect appeared in their talk. For example, in dealing with the concept of monopoly, definitions were at first vaguely defined.

Maggie: Tell me what you think monopoly is.
Chris: Like, it's when you . . .
Abbie: Selling and buying.

Further discussion deepened the original notion to include personal experience and moved the students closer to the idea of "ownership by one."

Maggie: What do you think monopoly means? I think it means . . .
Chris: Like it . . . the Monopoly game . . . you buy some of this part. . . .
Abbie: Buying and selling and getting money.
Maggie: Trading and . . . .
Laura: Trading . . . yeah.
Abbie: Trading . . . yeah.
Laura: Then buying and selling and getting money.

From there, the meaning of monopoly evolved into a complex of relationships. The students began to supply possible reasons for a monopoly, a "what if" scenario, and alternatives to business realities.

Laura: Yeah . . . there's not going to be any people.
Chris: Well . . . well . . . if we have a monopoly . . . right? We get all the furs if we have a monopoly and we can sell 'em and we have people working at stores . . . say they're only allowed to sell two or three furs to a person . . . they take all the furs to the market.
Maggie: The more . . . listen, the more you sell, the more money you make and plus you can go . . . go and hunt and get some, right? So we . . . so let them buy as much as they want . . . because the more they buy, the more money you make.
Chris: Yes, but what if the animals become extinct?
Maggie: What?
Chris: What if they go out of business . . . become bankrupt or something?
Maggie: We'd go hunting again . . .
Chris: Yeah, but we have to go away, far away. . . .

Unlike the limited language and learning for most tasks requiring defining, this example of defining monopoly illustrates a depth of understanding through talking. In the talking process itself, the students moved from a vague understanding of a concept to an elaborated and clearer definition. In other words, they talked themselves to clarity.

Shifting Strategies to Build Meaning

Vygotsky (1962) suggests that a new way of seeing things opens up new possibilities for handling them. The next task required the students to make guesses about the need for furs. As the students introduced new content to the discussion or offered the same content in different ways, the learning strategies they used to handle the new possibilities changed as the content changed. When the content of events and people was introduced, the discussion strategy students used to work into that content was of a hypothetical nature.

Maggie: Okay, no, no, no, okay, it says make some guesses about events, people. Okay, let's make it . . . some decisions about . . . you know . . . they. . . .
Chris: Events. . . .
Laura: Events. . . .
Maggie: That. . . .
Laura: That occur.
Maggie: Kathy.
Chris: Okay, let's say we're taking the train.

From this initial introduction of content and the subsequent learning strategy, the line of inquiry shifts accordingly. With the introduction of content about the French, Indians, and historical attitudes, their strategies included wondering, clarifying, and pretending.

Maggie: Can we?
Chris: Try . . . take a boat.
Laura: I wonder where he took a trip to? I forget.
Maggie: New France . . . Canada. Ohhhh *(inaudible)* to be really. . . .
Chris: We're the French.
Maggie: When the French came.
Chris: When the French came.
Maggie: Indians . . . they were. . . .
Laura: Different.
Maggie: Different.
Abbie: Felt different.
Chris: Yeah . . . they thought. . . .
Maggie: You think, you think the Indians won the war against the French?
Chris: I don't know because the French. . . .

Laura: I don't think so.
Chris: Took over their furs and . . . everything else like that.
Laura: Yes.
Maggie: But then. . . .
Laura: Their wildlife,
Maggie: We gave . . . the French gave the . . . the French gave the Indians a lot of stuff and they took. . . .
Laura: Yeah, they probably traded with each other.
Maggie: Metals and. . . .
Laura: Yeah, horses and metals and. . . .
Chris: Yeah, but they just wanted to . . . did their own fish from caviar.
Laura: . . . houses.
Maggie: Yeah, but . . . we wanted, they wanted fish.
Chris: And garbage like that.
Abbie: How do you know if they discovered caviar *(inaudible)* now?
Maggie: They didn't . . . they . . . I don't think they knew caviar yet.
Laura: (inaudible)
Abbie: I know.
Chris: No caviar.

As the students expanded and refined new content, they began to interpret the content in new ways—which in turn led to new learning strategies. The discussion shifted from the French taking over the trading of furs, horses, and metal, to the French wanting fish and caviar. The students shifted strategies to maintain an active and sensible line of inquiry. They moved from the past into the present and back to the past to maintain direct relevance to the fur trade topic.

In the following samples, once Maggie and Chris realized the topic of caviar was making little or no contribution to the scene of the task, they used their language to shift the topic. This gave a new shape to their inquiry.

Abbie: (whispers) 'Cause they haven't got cold storage yet.
Maggie: If they liked it . . . a lot of people like caviar and it would have been all gone . . . and then there would be no fish left.
Others: Yeah.
Laura: Right . . . caviar's expensive too.
Maggie: 'Cause all the fish . . . .
Chris: Well, we'll have to get back to the questions.
Maggie: Well, they probably didn't know. . . . Okay, let's see, some problems that occurred.

The logical processes in this discussion were not strongly linked together although the shifting of content and strategies was effective for making sense. In relation to Vygotsky's (1962) processes of higher psychological thought, each category introduced a new attribute to the content of the fur trade with weak bonds between each category. This use of student language to learn is the first

stage of abstraction. It is also the basis for later generalizations and relationships in true concept development.

Maggie Talking to Make Sense

Some of the literature on language and thought has suggested that logical ordering of information by children occurs through syntactic connectors such as *because, therefore, so, if,* and so on. However, this clause analysis approach should not be regarded as the only indicator that logical ordering is operating for students. As the students used their language to make meaning of the curriculum tasks, they constructed frames of knowledge. This process of reconstructing several frames of reference built a web of understanding about a concept. The following sample deals with the "cost of production" concept in the early fur trade.

This task required that Maggie make sense of a concept (cost of production) that upon first attempt seemed very difficult for her to understand. The fact that the concept had to relate to the fur trade of two hundred years ago seemed to add to her difficulty. However, given forty minutes to discuss the task, Maggie and her group reworked the concept in several different ways. Each reworking or framing of the concept seemed to move Maggie to an elaborated, yet clearer understanding of cost of production. There was no adult to provide information or influence the line of thinking. Maggie used her language and her friends' ideas to attempt an understanding of the given task.

In her first attempt, Maggie's conceptual and linguistic manipulations of "rising up" demonstrated the exploratory and unconventional nature of her beginning attempt to frame her thoughts. Additional relationships between prices, lazy people, and going out of business added detail to the conceptual framework. Other participants' talk has been deleted to reveal more clearly Maggie's framing of a concept.

> *Maggie:* Are they expensive? Are they rising or are they cheap rising?
>
> *Maggie:* No, I mean are they cheap rising up, expensive rising up or . . . just rising?
>
> *Maggie:* Well, do you think they should rise? . . . D'you think we should put a stop to it?
>
> *Maggie:* But what about the production? . . . Cost of producing or whatever?
>
> *Maggie:* It costs a lot to produce the furs . . . they don't just . . . they don't just tear them off the animal's back and give them to them . . . right?
>
> *Maggie:* Yeah, yeah . . . that's a lot of work.
>
> *Maggie:* Yeah, I don't, but that's work . . . and it . . . so it should cost . . . shouldn't cost.
>
> *Maggie:* Yeah, not . . . .
>
> *Maggie:* Yeah, you can make it into a lot of stuff . . . people are just too lazy to go out and . . . so they think if they can buy something then . . . . If they can buy it then they're okay . . . but if it gets higher . . . but if the price gets higher then a lot of people are going to go hunt by themselves and then . . . the fur trade will go out of business . . . right? . . . if the price gets too high.

Maggie: No one's gonna buy, right?

In the second framing, Maggie reshaped her knowledge by offering consequences and solutions for the three categories.

Maggie: Okay, but anyway . . . now let's see . . . so the cost of production . . . should be expensive but not too expensive because if you put it too expensive nobody's gonna buy them and they'll go out and hunt by themselves.

Maggie: Okay . . . so . . . but if we . . . we sell them we don't have some too expensive because then people will umm . . . people will think *(interruption)* people will think that there'll be some cheaper they can go get them for free . . . so I think we should put them at a . . . in between . . . you know, not too low and not too high, just like in between.

In the third reworking, personal knowledge—the everyday experience of marks—played a role. This is similar to Vygotsky's (1962) notion of the interweaving of personal, spontaneous concepts and public, scientific concepts to create a new system of thought for the language user.

Maggie: Just like in A. . . .

Maggie: Well, it's just like an A and a . . . .

Maggie: An A and a C . . . A's . . . like in a mark . . . A and C we give 'em it . . . it'd be a B . . . like middle.

In the fourth framing of the concept, Maggie explored the buying potential of money. Here, Maggie's language indicated a clearer understanding of the concept she attempted to organize. She substituted the scientific term "average" for her previous term for her spontaneous concept "the in-between cost" or "just rising." Such a shift in terminology seems to illustrate the relationship between using language to learn and learning language.

Maggie: Just rising . . . not too high . . . not low . . . just in between.

Maggie: Oh, that what . . . the economy yeah . . . we could . . . we could . . . whoever wants to buy them cheap or expensive or *average* can buy them . . . whoever wants to hunt them can have them. . . .

Next, Maggie continued to frame the cost of production concept by incorporating the hypothetical cost of producing a chocolate bar in today's world. She added justification to her thoughts with a "voice of authority"—a girl from Paris.

Maggie: Yeah, like a chocolate bar's reg . . . always . . . most forty cents . . . ever . . . regular stuff . . . but if you go and get it there. . . .

Maggie: If you make your own chocolate bar it'd take . . . about . . . 'cause if you make a chocolate bar . . . say you have to put . . . cocoa in it . . . right *(Others: Mmm),* say, oh, you have to put cocoa in it . . . so you have to put . . . five table . . . no, five teaspoons, okay . . . of cocoa . . . and you put . . . chocolate chips.

Maggie: You have to buy a thing of it so that's a lot of money . . . right?

Maggie: Mea . . . 'cause they have to buy it because they make 'em one after another, so they should just *(inaudible)* expensive one.

Maggie: You know what they charge you in Paris . . . for a chocolate bar . . . a dollar twenty-five.

Maggie: A small chocolate bar like we have . . . *I know this girl who is from Paris who told me this . . . she told me yesterday.*

Finally, Maggie framed the present reality of chocolate bars back to the past reality of the fur trade. This time she explored the costs with more detail and relevance to the trading aspect of the past.

Maggie: But you get really good furs so you can trade two for one . . . like trade two pieces of . . . like . . . .

Maggie: Two pieces of fur for one big piece or something.

Maggie: Yeah, but if we . . . we could have just like . . . you could trade . . . like some . . . one for one, but you would trade . . . you would trade one um . . . .

Maggie: Two small ones for a big one . . . but you might trade two for one even if . . . you might trade two big . . . one, one . . . one big one and one big one . . . but one big one and one small one . . . one small one for one big one . . . about the same size . . . right?

From her initial framing of cost of production, Maggie developed six different frames of knowledge about one concept. Maggie used her knowledge to organize her thoughts about the fur trade of two hundred years ago. She had limited use of one-word connectors. Nor did she always talk in complete clauses or sentences. However, the six sections seem to indicate her use of language to explore and organize the concept of cost of production in the fur trade. In addition, her exploratory use of language to rework the notion seems to develop her language toward the conventional language of public knowledge about a subject.

Conclusions

Maggie's use of language reminds us of the struggle students can have in their attempt to understand. Her oral language seems messy and chaotic. However, embedded in the struggle to make sense, Maggie's use of language demonstrates an extremely sophisticated and complex structuring of knowledge. She appeared to have implicit understanding of the contextual clues provided by the nature of the task (although, by her teacher's assessment, Maggie is only an "average" student academically).

Many factors may contribute to a student's difficulty in using oral language to understand curriculum tasks. Some of the possibilities may be:

1. The failure to interpret the nature of the task (What does it mean to "define"?)
2. The limitations set by the nature of the task (To "define" means to state in one sentence.)
3. The difficulty in finding other concepts to talk about this concept (I don't know what it means, but I know other things sort of like it.)

4. The predetermined expectations by the teacher (Do not talk about it too much; we have to "cover the curriculum.")
5. The language of others confuses or is irrelevant to one's train of thought (What has that got to do with this task? That idea is wrong.)
6. The problem of subject-specific, scientific terminology does not match the linguistic terminology of spontaneous thought (Maggie knows it costs to produce a chocolate bar, but she never uses the terminology "cost of production.")

On the other hand, students seem to bring a wealth of meaning to the school curriculum. We teachers must begin to respect and utilize those meanings. In turn, we must allow them to weave their personal knowledge and language with the formal knowledge and scientific terminology of the school curriculum. They need to use their language to explore and discover new meanings as well as to reconstruct their presently held knowledge. In addition, alternative opportunities to use language to learn must be provided. If we choose not to control the use of student language and learning, we should be prepared for their own exploration and discoveries about language. Once we remain open to student use of language, we will be required to go beyond linguistic surface structures and categories. We also need to trust students' desire and ability to make sense. The most important aspect of our role may simply be to listen. We not only have to allow language for learning, but also provide plenty of time for the students' struggle to make sense. We may only need to take part in post-discussion, taking notes for students, resolving conflict, providing additional information and clarifying terminology. Paradoxically, by exercising less directive control over the process and stages of student learning (and language), we may be enabling students to more effectively achieve and arrive at teacher-determined learning goals.

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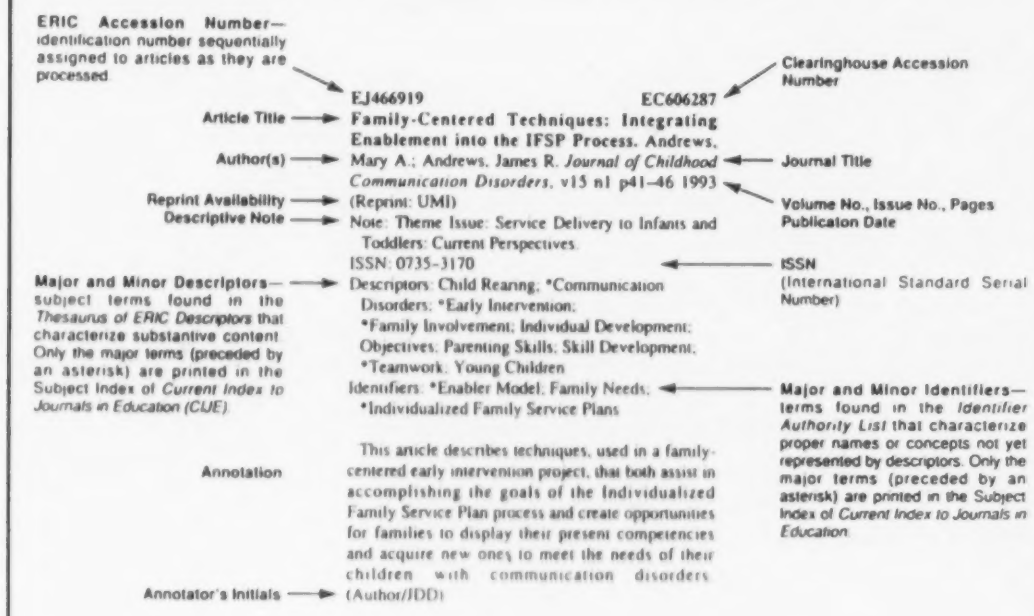
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AB: Notes that jump rope rhymes and street chants are part of an oral tradition that links communication and play. Although rarely incorporated into the elementary curriculum, they expose children to rhyme, rhythm, humor, and poetry. Discusses opportunities for student involvement and integration of rhymes and chants across the curriculum, and suggests other related activities. (DR)

AN: EJ505236
AU: Webster,-Penelope-E.; Plante,-Amy-Solomon
TI: **Productive Phonology and Phonological Awareness in Preschool Children.**
PY: 1995
JN: Applied-Psycholinguistics; v16 n1 p43-57 Mar 1995
AV: UMI
AB: Reports on a longitudinal study of the relationship between productive phonological ability and awareness in children under the age of six. The study followed 45 subjects with variant productive phonology levels from the mean age of 3 years, 6 months to 6 years, 0 months. As a child matures in productive phonology, accompanying exponential growth in phonological awareness occurs. (31 references) (Author/CK)

AN: EJ503237
AU: Surian,-Luca
TI: **Children's Ambiguous Utterances: A Re-examination of Processing Limitations on Production.**
PY: 1995
JN: Journal-of-Child-Language; v22 n1 p151-69 Feb 1995
AV: UMI
AB: Investigated the relationship between children's failures to produce unambiguous utterances and the mental effort demands in children (ages five, six, seven, and nine years), using finger-tapping and message production tasks, separately and simultaneously. Findings suggest that the relative effort requirements of communication decrease with increasing age, supporting a theory of communication development where effort demands are a determinate of message adequacy. (34 references) (NAV)

AN: ED380378
AU: McCallister,-Cynthia
TI: **The Language of a Classroom Democracy.**
PY: 1994
NT: 16 p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Childhood Education International (New Orleans, LA, March 30-April 2, 1994).
PR: EDRS Price - MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
AB: This research analyzes language development in the classroom as fostering the development of students who are community builders, problem solvers and critical thinkers. Examples of both positive and negative classroom situations are used to illustrate these three language domains. Successful classrooms are safe communities where children are willing to take risks and offer opinions, where they respect their peers and the teacher and, in return, are equally respected. Teachers play a pivotal role in developing that sense of community, but often fail to do so based on their own personal classroom experiences. As a result, the teacher-centered mode dominates where language is used mostly to control and regulate student behavior. This "silencing" of students is analyzed through Michelle Fine's work in New York City public schools and other related research. A reality based curriculum with real life problems for students to resolve with opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills is suggested. (EH)

AN: ED380243
AU: Lancy,-David-F., Ed.
TI: **Children's Emergent Literacy: From Research to Practice.**
PY: 1994
AV: Praeger Publishers, 88 Post Road West, Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881 ($65).
NT: 416 p.; Foreword by James Moffett. Based on papers originally presented at a conference held at the University of Toledo in 1991.
PR: Document Not Available from EDRS.
AB: Noting that renaming common folk practices as "emergent literacy" practices legitimizes these unacknowledged ways of learning to read and write, this book highlights the importance of out-of-school literacy experiences and the value of real literature and real writing. It stresses a reciprocal relationship between basic research on the social, cultural, and cognitive roots of literacy and applied research on programs that attempt to create or recreate environments that support children's emerging literacy. The titles of the articles are: (1) "The Conditions that Support Emergent Literacy" (David Lancy); (2) "Early Literacy from a Developmental Perspective" (A. D. Pellegrini and Lee Galda); (3) "Not by Print Alone: Oral Language Supports for Early Literacy Development" (David Dickinson and Diane Beals); (4) "Nonliterate Homes and Emergent Literacy" (Victoria Purcell-Gates); (5) "Parents' Interactions with Beginning Readers" (Christi Bergin and others); (6) "Helping Parents Help Their Children: Early Language Stimulation in the Child's Home" (Ann-Katrin Svensson); (7) "A Microgenetic Study of Cognitive Reorganization during the Transition to Conventional Literacy" (George Kamberelis and Michelle Perry); (8) "Stimulating/Simulating Environments that Support Emergent Literacy" (David Lancy with Susan D. Talley); (9) "Too Little, Too Late: A Case Study of

'Running Start'" (David Lancy with Anne Burke Zupsic); (10) "Discriminating between the Disadvantaged: Adjusting to Family Differences" (Derek Toomey and Judith Sloane); (11) "Parents and Children Sharing Literacy" (Jeanne Paratore); (12) "The Even Start Initiative" (Ruth Wilson and Jackie Aldridge); (13) "It Takes a Whole Village to Raise a Child: Supplementing Instruction for 'At-Risk' Kindergarten Students" (Eileen Carr); (14) "Play Settings as Literacy Environments: Their Effects on Children's Literacy Behaviors" (Kathy Roskos and Susan Neuman); (15) "'Goin' to Grandma's House': Using Instructional Conversation to Promote Literacy and Reduce Resistance in Minority Children" (Lynne Hudson and others); (16) "Three Different Early Literacy Programs and Their Effect on Inner-City Kindergartners' Emerging Sense of Story" (Lynne Putnam); (17) "Reading Recovery: Teaching through Conversation" (Patricia Kelly and others); and (18) "Designing a Collaborative Model of Family Involvement in Literacy: Researchers, Teachers, and Parents Work Together" (Patricia Edwards and others). A bibliography with 476 items is included. (HTH)

AN: EJ495305
AU: Smith,-Miriam-W.; Dickinson,-David-K.
TI: **Describing Oral Language Opportunities and Environments in Head Start and Other Preschool Classrooms.**
PY: 1994
JN: Early-Childhood-Research-Quarterly; v9 n3-4 p345-66 1994
NT: Special Issue on Head Start.
AB: Describes the nature of children's oral language experiences in Head Start and other preschool programs serving low-income families and relates those experiences to broader features of the classrooms' programs. Finds that small class size, teacher education levels, and developmentally appropriate curricula are positively associated with high levels of teacher-child interaction and child language development. (MDM)

AN: ED377945
AU: Goodman,-Judith-C., Ed.; Nusbaum,-Howard-C., Ed.
TI: **The Development of Speech Perception: The Transition from Speech Sounds to Spoken Words.**
PY: 1994
AV: MIT Press, 55 Hayward Street, Cambridge, MA 02142 ($42.50).
NT: 351 p.; Papers presented at the Workshop on Recognizing Spoken Language (Chicago, IL, June 1989).
PR: Document Not Available from EDRS.
AB: This book contains a collection of current research in the development of speech perception and perceptual learning. The collection integrates research involving infants, young children, and adults, and explores systematically how adult perceptual abilities develop from early infant capabilities, focusing particularly on the nature of transitional stages and the constraints they place on theories of speech perception. The nine chapters in the book are: (1) "Developing Theories of Speech Perception: Constraints from Developmental Data" (Judith Goodman and others); (2) "Observations on Speech Perception, Its Development, and the Search for a Mechanism" (Joanne Miller and Peter Eimas); (3) "The Importance of Childhood to Language Acquisition: Evidence from American Sign Language" (Rachel Mayberry); (4) "Cross-Language Speech Perception: Developmental Change Does Not Involve Loss" (Janet Werker); (5) "Perceptual Learning of Nonnative Speech Contrasts: Implications for Theories of Speech Perception" (David Pisoni and others); (6) "The Emergence of Native-Language Phonological Influences in Infants: A Perceptual Assimilation Model" (Catherine Best); (7) "Infant Speech Perception and the Development of the Mental Lexicon" (Peter Jusczyk); (8) "Sentential Processes in Early Child Language: Evidence from the Perception and Production of Function Morphemes" (LouAnn Gerken); and (9) "Learning to Hear Speech as Spoken Language" (Howard Nusbaum and Judith Goodman). Each chapter includes references. (TJQ)

AN: EJ493478
AU: Miller,-Judith-C.
TI: **Early Education Special Education: Communication Delay and Literacy.**
PY: 1994
JN: Day-Care-&-Early-Education; v22 n1 p40-42 Fall 1994
AV: UMI
AB: Noting that in a traditional view oral language comes before literacy, addresses some of the aspects of the development of literacy in children with communicative delay. Describes the experience of two children who began constructing their own literacy as they were involved in an intensive speech-language intervention program. (TJQ)

AN: EJ488077
AU: Levy,-Elena; Nelson,-Katherine
TI: **Words in Discourse: A Dialectical Approach to the Acquisition of Meaning and Use.**
PY: 1994
JN: Journal-of-Child-Language; v21 n2 p367-89 Jun 1994
AV: UMI
AB: Word learning by young children is viewed as a problem deriving from the use of forms of discourse texts. Uses of causal and temporal terms in private speech by a child studied longitudinally from 1;9 to 3;0 are analyzed from this perspective. (Contains 38 references.) (JL)

AN: EJ486549
AU: Bloom,-Paul; And-Others
TI: **Children's Knowledge of Binding and Coreference: Evidence from Spontaneous Speech.**
PY: 1994
JN: Language; v70 n1 p53-71 Mar 1994
AV: UMI
AB: A longitudinal analysis of the spontaneous speech (first-person pronouns and reflexives) of three children tests the claim that children's poor performance in binding and coreference is due to performance factors. Children appear to understand the principles of binding and coreference at the

earliest stages of language development. (33 references) (Author/LB)

AN: EJ471400
AU: Lee,-Young-Ja
TI: Young Children's Written Language Development and Oral and Written Language Awareness.
PY: 1993
JN: Early-Child-Development-and-Care; v85 p97-108 1993
NT: Special Issue: Perspectives on Korean Child Care, Development and Education.
AB: Three to five-year-olds' visual discrimination and phonetic sound awareness were assessed, their knowledge about storybook reading and writing was investigated, and their play with blocks was observed. Found that children's reading and writing behaviors advanced with age, and that children at different reading and writing levels showed different behavioral characteristics. (BC)

AN: EJ465602
AU: Swann,-Joan
TI: What Do We Do about Gender?
PY: 1992
JN: Language-and-Education; v6 n2-4 p249-58 1992
NT: Special issue, "Language, Culture, and Education."
AB: Concerns about differences and inequalities in girls' and boys' spoken language and interactional styles have prompted the development of alternative classroom strategies, which are reviewed. Three broad approaches are discussed--antisexist, liberal, and profemale--each suggesting different strategies for positive action. (27 references) (Author/LB)

AN: EJ464546
AU: Anders,-Patricia-L.; Pritchard,-T.-Gail
TI: Integrated Language Curriculum and Instruction for the Middle Grades.
PY: 1993
JN: Elementary-School-Journal; v93 n5 p611-24 May 1993
AV: UMI
NT: Thematic Issue: Middle Grades Research and Reform.
AB: Recommends that curriculum and instruction be designed to engage students in using the tools of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Describes a curriculum framework that takes into account adolescents' language development and uses language to integrate various academic subjects. (PAM)

AN: EJ462356
AU: Kies,-Daniel-A.; And-Others
TI: Oral Language Development through Storytelling: An Approach to Emergent Literacy.
PY: 1993
JN: Reading-Improvement; v30 n1 p43-48 Spr 1993
AV: UMI
AB: Addresses the relevance of storytelling as an informal technique that gets children hooked to reading and writing. Maintains that the technique is highly regarded as providing children with a wide range of conceptual experiences that prepare them for the literacy challenge. (SR)

AN: EJ455652
AU: Thomas,-Karen-F.; And-Others
TI: Oral Language, Literacy and Schooling: Kindergarten Years.
PY: 1992
JN: Reading-Horizons; v33 n2 p149-66 1992
AV: UMI
AB: Reports findings from the second year of a three-year study following four children from a prekindergarten Head Start program through first grade. Investigates the impact of kindergarten instruction on the development of literacy. Suggests that children may define writing and reading as their teachers' instructional practices dictate. (SR)

AN: EJ452768
AU: Buckley,-Marilyn-Hanf
TI: We Listen a Book a Day; We Speak a Book a Week: Learning from Walter Loban (Focus on Research).
PY: 1992
JN: Language-Arts; v69 n8 p622-26 Dec 1992
AV: UMI
NT: Themed Issue: Oral Language and Language Arts Education.
AB: Provides a retrospective of the research of Walter Loban. Discusses the primacy of oral language, language development, and the interrelationships between oral and written language in his research. (RS)

AN: EJ452406
AU: Torgesen,-Joseph-K.; And-Others
TI: Effects of Two Types of Phonological Awareness Training on Word Learning in Kindergarten Children.
PY: 1992
JN: Journal-of-Educational-Psychology; v84 n3 p364-70 Sep 1992
AV: UMI
AB: Effects of 2 types of oral language training programs on development of phonological awareness skills and word learning ability were examined for 48 kindergartners. Children receiving analytic and synthetic training improved significantly on both types of skills, but children receiving synthetic skills training alone improved only in blending skills. (SLD)

AN: EJ438222
AU: Garvey,-Catherine
TI: Introduction Special Issue on Talk.
PY: 1992
JN: Merrill-Palmer-Quarterly; v38 n1 piii-vii Jan 1992
AV: UMI
NT: Invitational Issue: Talk in the Study of Socialization and Development, Catherine Garvey, Guest Editor.
AB: The role that talk plays in socialization, social development, and possibly cognitive development is described. Research on talk is categorized as follows: studies that consider talk as a tool for investigation; studies that focus on development of grammar or language acquisition; and studies that fall between those extremes. (LB)

AN: ED360779
AU: Chesnick,-M.-A.; And-Others
TI: **Language Impairment and Reading Impairment: Do These Children Differ in Oral Language Processing Abilities?**
PY: 1992
NT: 18 p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association (San Antonio, TX, November 20-23, 1992).
PR: EDRS Price - MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
AB: This study investigated the development of oral metalinguistic abilities in 140 children (ages 5-12) with oral language or reading impairments. The study focused on determining the difficulties that children with these different types of problems have at different ages in the elementary school years and determining how metalinguistic abilities change as children mature. Subjects were divided into two groups by age and into four different groups based on nature and extent of disorder. Results indicated that, among the younger children, there were few significant differences among the four groups in language metaprocessing difficulties. Children with oral language problems and children with both oral and written language problems had difficulty in syntactic processing tasks and in recalling words presented at random. Children who had only reading problems did better than children in the at risk and combined disorder (oral and written language) groups in phoneme segmentation. The paper concludes that the four identified groups differ in degree of difficulty but not in type of difficulty. (JDD)

AN: ED356468
AU: Siegel,-Janna
TI: **Including Language in Reading Instruction.**
PY: 1992
NT: 13 p.
PR: EDRS Price - MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
AB: Traditional reading methods have not focused on the language of students in the classroom as an important component of teaching reading. Language researchers have discovered that expressive oral language is an important component of reading instruction. There are several suggestions for the promotion of good language development that have been derived from the research of language, including: (1) take the child's attempts to initiate conversation seriously by listening with interest to what she or he has to say; and (2) in responding, make the child's meaning the point of departure for the adult's contribution. Research has also demonstrated the effectiveness of several classroom techniques: reducing teacher talk; a conversation/interaction form of instruction; and "responsive teaching." Teachers need to promote expressive language techniques to give the best reading instruction possible to their students. (A figure presenting a transcript from a responsive teaching session is included.) (RS)

AN: ED355832
AU: Strong,-Michael, Ed.
TI: **Language Learning and Deafness.**
PY: 1988
AV: Cambridge University Press, 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011.
NT: 314 p.; Cambridge Applied Linguistics series.
PR: Document Not Available from EDRS.
AB: This collection of original papers draws upon work in linguistics, psychology, and education to highlight the relationship between language acquisition in deaf and hearing populations. The book's 11 chapters are divided into 2 sections, Theoretical Issues and Research Reports. Titles and authors are as follows: "Language Varieties in the Deaf Population and Their Acquisition by Children and Adults" (Joseph H. Bochner and John A. Albertini); "American Sign Language and the Human Biological Capacity for Language"(James Paul Gee and Wendy Goodhart); "The History of Language Use in the Education of the Deaf in the United States" (Mimi WheiPing Lou); "Sign Language Instruction and Its Implications for the Deaf" (Steven Fritsch Rudser); "A Bilingual Approach to the Education of Young Deaf Children: ASL and English" (Michael Strong); "An Assessment of Syntactic Capabilities" (Gerald P. Berent); "Children's New Sign Creations" (Diane Lillo-Martin); "Linguistic and Cultural Role Models for Hearing-Impaired Children in Elementary School Programs" (James Woodward, Thomas Allen, and Arthur Schildroth); "Acquiring Linguistic and Social Identity: Interactions of Deaf Children with a Hearing Teacher and a Deaf Adult" (Carol J. Erting); "Development of Vocal and Signed Communication in Deaf and Hearing Twins of Deaf Parents" (Martha Gonter Gausted); and "Questions and Answers in the Development of Deaf Children" (Hilde Schlesinger). (LB)

AN: ED350584
AU: Morrow,-Lesley-Mandel, Comp.; And-Others
TI: **Resources in Early Literacy Development. An Annotated Bibliography.**
CS: International Reading Association, Newark, Del.
PY: 1992
AV: International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Rd., P.O. Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139 (Book No. 342; $3 members, $4.50 nonmembers).
NT: 58 p.; Project of the Reading/Language in Early Childhood Committee, 1990.
PR: EDRS Price - MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
AB: Intended to disseminate new information about early literacy development to teachers of young children, this 125-item annotated bibliography includes listings of books, book chapters, pamphlets, journal articles, and videocassettes that can help enhance teachers' knowledge base about theory and strategies in early literacy development. The material in the bibliography was published between 1973 and 1993. An introduction describes the areas of early literacy development under which the resources in the bibliography are categorized. The bibliography is divided into the following sections: (1) General Issues; (2) The Home Environment; (3) Oral Language; (4) Writing and Drawing; (5) Children's Literature; (6) Developing Comprehension; (7) Learning about Print; (8) Play; (9) Television; (10) Computers; and (11) Assessment. (RS)

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AN: ED335886
AU: Bloom,-Paul
TI: **Why Do Children Omit Subjects?**
PY: 1989
NT: 9 p.; In: Papers and Reports on Child Language Development, Number 28, p57-64, Aug 1989. For the proceedings, see FL 019 336.
PR: EDRS Price - MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
AB: A discussion of young children's production of English utterances with missing constituents focuses on the omission of subjects. The theory that young children have different grammars from those of adults is disputed, and it is suggested that, instead, subjects are omitted due to performance factors. Processing limitations in child language are evidenced in early difficulties with utterance length, omission of other constituents, and some children's reduction of the subject to a schwa. A study of the speech of three children supported the processing theory's prediction that children's subjectless sentences would tend to have longer verb phrases than sentences with subjects. Therefore, in contrast to the notion that children acquiring English represent pro-drop grammars until they are 2 to 3 years old, it is proposed that children initially represent overt subjects as obligatory (non-pro-drop), and only when hearing subjectless sentences do they change their grammars to pro-drop, as in Italian. (MSE)

AN: EJ384126
AU: Bohannon,-John-Neil,-III; Leubecker,-Amye-Warren
TI: **Recent Developments in Speech to Children: We've Come a Long Way, Baby-talk.**
PY: 1988
JN: Language-Sciences; v10 n1 p89-110 1988
AV: UMI
AB: Describes a model that allows children to control the complexity of the speech they hear within conversations on a moment-to-moment basis. Experimental and observational data clearly delineate the reciprocal nature of how speakers "fine-tune" their speech to listeners. The effects of child-directed speech on language development are discussed. (Author/CB)

AN: EJ382735
AU: Cathro,-Lorraine
TI: **Using and Developing Students' Language.**
PY: 1988
JN: Canadian-Journal-of-Native-Education; v15 n2 p22-32 1988
AB: Explains seven functions of oral language used by preschool and primary school children and the importance of expanding them with Native American students. Suggests classroom application, evaluation methods, and ways for teachers to monitor their own use of language with students. Methods applicable to all grade levels. (TES)

AN: EJ359878
AU: Dickinson,-David-K.; Snow,-Catherine-E.
TI: **Interrelationships among Prereading and Oral Language Skills in Kindergartners from Two Social Classes.**
PY: 1987
JN: Early-Childhood-Research-Quarterly; v2 n1 p1-25 Mar 1987
AB: Thirty-three kindergartners from two social classes were tested on an array of prereading and oral language skills. Prereading skills were found to be highly intercorrelated and to relate to ability to provide decontextualized definitions for words. Oral language measures of decontextualized skill correlated within task, but not across tasks. (PCB)

AN: EJ357971
AU: Brock,-Sue
TI: **Talking Helps Young Writers.**
PY: 1987
JN: Australian-Journal-of-Reading; v10 n2 p100-19 Jun 1987
AV: UMI
NT: Focused Theme Issue: Talk in Classrooms.
AB: Discusses ways in which talk during writing and group discussion can help children's writing, including (1) helping teachers learn to listen, (2) teaching children to elaborate and clarify, (3) giving children experience with an audience and reasons for writing, (4) helping children gather ideas and assistance, and (5) teaching children to be critical. (SKC)

AN: EJ354545
AU: Garrard,-Kay-R.
TI: **Helping Young Children Develop Mature Speech Patterns.**
PY: 1987
JN: Young-Children; v42 n3 p16-21 Mar 1987
AV: UMI
AB: Discusses the development of complex sentence and other language embellishments in preschool children. Emphasizes implications for parents and teachers who facilitate such language development. (BB)

AN: EJ346934
AU: Edmiston,-Brian; And-Others
TI: **Empowering Readers and Writers Through Drama: Narrative Theater.**
PY: 1987
JN: Language-Arts; v64 n2 p219-28 Feb 1987
AV: UMI
NT: Thematic Issue: Empowerment.
AB: Describes a process called narrative theater that involves (1) the exploration of texts and the stories likely embedded within them, (2) a learning process that involves the creation of drama contexts, and (3) the use of theater conventions. (SRT)

AN: EJ332835
AU: Clay,-Marie-M.
TI: **Constructive Processes: Talking, Reading, Writing, Art, and Craft.**
PY: 1986
JN: Reading-Teacher; v39 n8 p764-70 Apr 1986
AV: UMI
NT: Special Issue: Reading, Writing, Thinking
AB: Argues that for a child to respond to a teacher, whether by reading, talking, writing, constructing a village, or painting a drama backdrop, the child must relate, remember, relearn, monitor, problem-solve,

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and do all those other mental activities that help humans adapt and create new solutions. (HOD)

AN: EJ324751
AU: Garner,-Thurmon
TI: **Developing Rhetorical Competency in an Oral Culture.**
PY: 1985
JN: Western-Journal-of-Black-Studies; v9 n1 p17-22 Sum 1985
AB: Explores the discourse and speech acts used by Black children between the ages of 5 and 10 in one Midwestern community. Examines the rhetorical devices of teasing, name-calling, riddles, and joke-stories and hypothesizes as to the functional significance of each in the cultural environment. (SA)

AN: EJ313524
AU: Harper,-Kay-A.; Decker,-Douglas-L.
TI: **Making Connections with Storytelling.**
PY: 1984
JN: Journal-of-the-Virginia-College-Reading-Educators; v5 n1 p17-23 Fall 1984
NT: Virginia College Reading Educators, School of ESducation, Virginia Commonwealth University, 901 W. Franklin St., Richmond, VA 23284.
AB: Describes several storytelling activities that allow children to develop their speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills. (FL)

AN: EJ312455
AU: Levy,-Ann-K.
TI: **The Language of Play: The Role of Play in Language Development. A Review of Literature.**
PY: 1984
JN: Early-Child-Development-and-Care; v17 n1 p49-62 1984
AV: UMI
AB: Reviews literature about play to examine the use of language to facilitate play, play with language as an object, and egocentric speech in play situations. Finds a definite link between language and play. (Author/AS)

AN: EJ293064
AU: Kreeft,-Joy
TI: **Dialogue Writing--Bridge from Talk to Essay Writing.**
PY: 1984
JN: Language-Arts; v61 n2 p141-50 Feb 1984
AV: UMI
NT: (Thematic Issue: Talk)
AB: Explores how dialog writing, in which two participants "converse in writing," incorporates the interactive aspects of oral communication and the self-directed aspects of essay writing. Includes passages written over a year's time by a sixth grade student in a "dialogue journal" showing the development of his writing. (HTH)

AN: EJ293000
AU: Baghban,-Marcia
TI: **The Application of Culturally Relevant Factors to Literacy Programs in Appalachia.**
PY: 1984
JN: Reading-Horizons; v24 n2 p75-82 Win 1984
AV: UMI
AB: Discusses the strong oral tradition in the Appalachia region. Examines conflicts that arise when educators stress the importance of reading and writing to Appalachian children while ignoring the home and regional influences that shape their lives. (FL)

AN: EJ277860
AU: Dyson,-Anne-Haas
TI: **The Role of Oral Language in Early Writing Processes.**
PY: 1983
JN: Research-in-the-Teaching-of-English; v17 n1 p1-30 Feb 1983
AV: Reprint: UMI
AB: Examines kindergarten children's use of talk during writing to draw inferences regarding how children use speech to make sense of written language. (HOD)

AN: EJ274434
AU: Butler-Adam,-Jane-E.
TI: **"For Rosemary Who Hardly Ever Spoke."**
PY: 1982
JN: Gifted-Education-International; v1 n1 p14-21 1982
AB: The article summarized findings on the oral output of 40 gifted elementary school children who voluntarily attended language workshop sessions. Students were offered a wide range of oral expression, yet they exhibited haphazard and inconsistent oral abilities. Recommendations are made to improve the linguistic abilities of gifted children. (CL)

AN: ED299574
AU: Alex,-Nola-Kortner
TI: **Storytelling: Its Wide-Ranging Impact in the Classroom.** ERIC Digest Number 9. IDEN: *Story Telling by Children; ERIC Digests
CS: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Bloomington, IN.
PY: 1988
NT: 3 p.
PR: EDRS Price - MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
AB: Storytelling, a creative art form with a long history and considerable instructional potential, is increasingly regarded in schools and communities as literature. Recent papers and articles in the ERIC database discuss the use of storytelling in the classroom to develop language abilities, literature appreciation, critical thinking and comprehension, and understanding of community and self. Storytelling is effective in fostering a relaxed and intimate atmosphere in the classroom. Numerous activities can be employed to build children's storytelling skills. For a classroom teacher who wishes to use storytelling, it is best to begin with a simple story with action, a definite climax, and a conclusion the students will find satisfactory, and to remember that enjoyment is the first and chief consideration. The second consideration in effective storytelling should be to encourage exploration and experimentation with language. (Twenty-two references are attached.) (SR)

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